

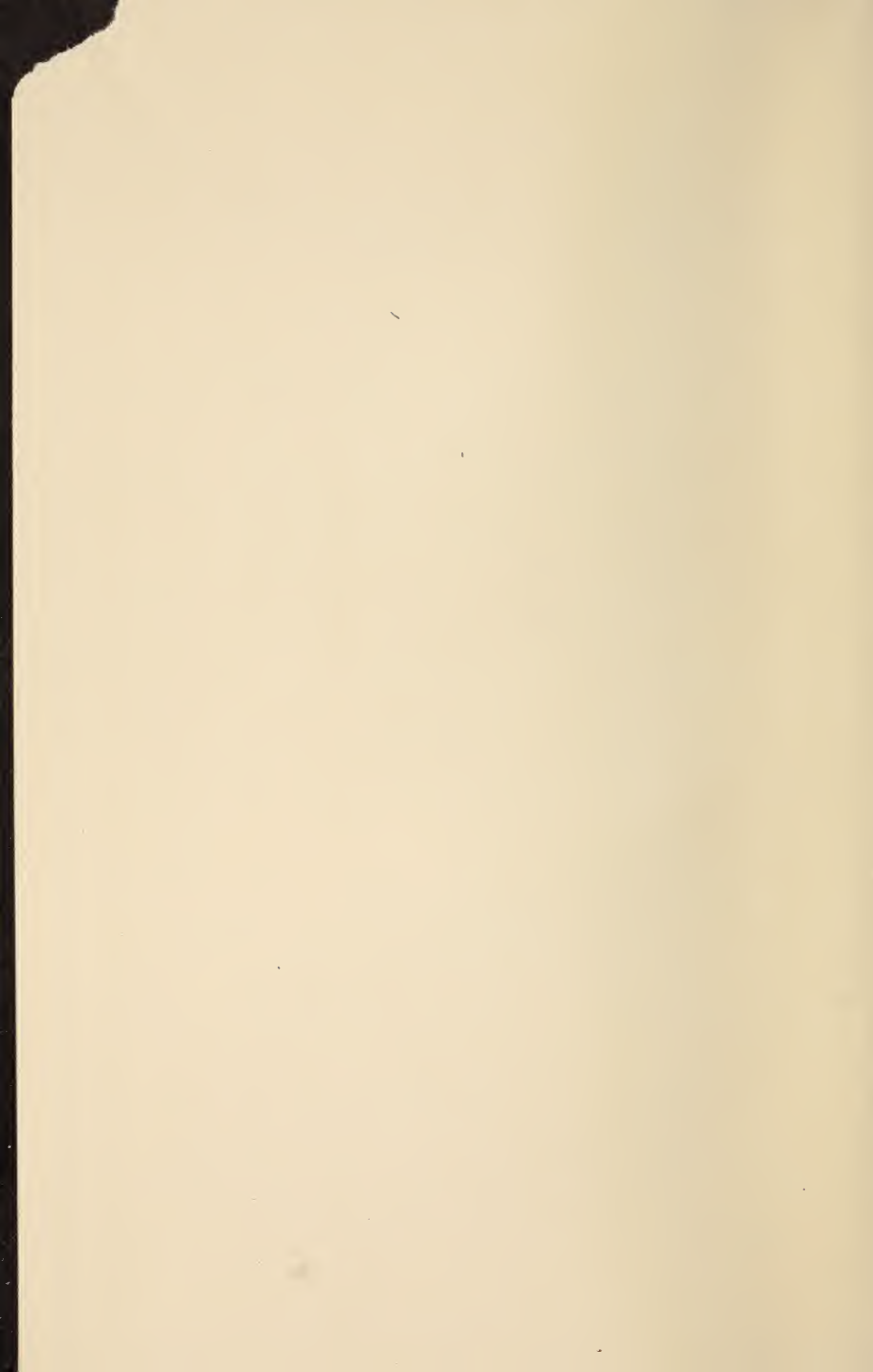


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The New Earth
And Other Sermons

The New Earth

And Other Sermons

By

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no 1

To

*Jean and the boys
who constitute
the church that is in my house
and to the
three thousand members of Immanuel Church
who constitute
the church that is ever on my heart*

Foreword

DURING the summer of the eventful year 1918, the National Service Commission of the Presbyterian Church planned a tour of the United States for some fifty of its ministers. These men were to go in companies of two each to assigned districts, and for six weeks or more carry the message of religious preparedness for the New Day that was to follow the war, to all whom they could reach. By way of preparation for this labour of love, a series of interviews was graciously accorded this group of ministers by the Department heads in Washington, including the President himself. Fresh from these conferences the men returned to prepare their messages of reconstruction and re-consecration.

In the providence of God, however, the tour was never made. First: Because of the influenza epidemic which closed all public meetings. Second: Because of the unexpected signing of the armistice, almost on the very day when the itinerant ambassadors of righteousness were to begin their work. The only recourse that was left to the men was to deliver their messages to their respective congregations. The writer, however, has dared to hope that some of these addresses might profitably reach a larger hearing, and hence this book. Read it if you will. Profit by it if

you can, and if you cannot, remember that the Scripture says that "of making many books there is no end," and give the author at least the credit of doing his part to help fulfill this prophecy.

HERBERT BOOTH SMITH.

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I

THE NEW EARTH

"I saw a new earth."—REVELATION 21:1.

THIS text sounds strange. *We* did not know it was in the Bible. Is it really there? Yes, there it is, in the place where it has always been, but the reason it sounds unfamiliar to you is that it has escaped emphasis because it stood in the background of another great statement which has hitherto been emphasized at the expense of its humble brother: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth." Oh yes, we place it now. That sounds familiar. But to tell the truth, every time we read that phrase we were so busy thinking about the new heaven and arguing where it was, that we did not have much interest left for the lower story of earth. Well now, I am going to pass by entirely the new heaven this morning without any apology, and tell you frankly that just at this juncture of events I am more interested in the new earth than in the new heaven.

Why! What do we need a new earth for? We do not usually demand a new hat, or coat, or auto, or house, until the old ones have become worn out. Is that true of Earth? Is it worn out? Yes, I believe it is. The old régime, the old system, is worn out and run down at the heel, and instead of trying to patch

it up again, it is cheaper and simpler to build a new one. Nobody knows how old the earth is. One recent guess by the United States Geological Department is that the age of the earth is between 55,000,000 and 75,000,000 years. Estimates differ widely, for Kelvin said 20,000,000, and Darwin 400,000,000 years. Nobody knows. Theology has 132 different answers for the age of the earth at the birth of Christ. But while theologians differ in their estimates, scientists differ still more in theirs. The astronomer Halley suggested a unique way of determining the age of the earth from the amount of salt contained in the ocean. The assumption is that once there was no salt water, and therefore all the salt in the ocean was once in the land, and has been washed into the water in the passage of time. Find out how much salt is now in the water, find out how much goes in in one year, then divide the former by the latter, and you get your answer. This is one method. The other basis of calculation is geological, and is a study of the various strata of rocks known to science. Darwin, Lyell, Reade and others have worked at the problem from this point of view but there has been no agreement among authorities as yet.

Here, then, comes the minister (who is neither a student of the sea nor of the rocks, but a watcher of the footprints of God in human history, and a reader of the signs of the times) and he makes this answer to the question, "How old is the earth to-day?" "It is old enough to demand a new kind of human life." So, then, his answer does not concern the physical age of the earth? Oh, not at all. It concerns the

higher thing: the mental and moral and spiritual age of the earth. I say to Science: "*You* can figure on the age of the house humanity lives in; *I* am interested in the age of the human race itself." "Well, then, you mean your sermon to-day is to discuss how long ago Adam lived?" "Oh, not at all. There are other ways of measuring time than the horizontal. I am talking about the vertical. Didn't the poet tell you long ago that we do not live in figures on a dial, but in heart-throbs of sympathy? Paul does not say, 'Grow in girth,' or 'Grow in gray-headedness,' but 'Grow in grace.'" That is my viewpoint. I believe the race has so grown in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that instead of believing we are ready for the pit, we may see so many signs of progress to-day that we may truthfully say, "I saw a new earth." Let me, then, call your attention to some of the things which catch our eye as we stand in the watch tower and survey the landscape o'er.

I. There is a New Attitude Toward Class Distinctions, or a New Appreciation of Humanity.

Dr. Jowett once said that the difference between Jesus' attitude to people and the world's attitude to people might be expressed in this way: That the world divided people into three classes horizontally; viz., the poor, the comfortable, and the rich. Jesus, on the other hand, divided people into two classes by a vertical line: the saved and the lost; the sheep and the goats. Now, Jesus' line of division has been running down through humanity ever since He pro-

claimed it: "He that is not with me is against me." But His line has been obscured by those artificial lines which Society and Public Opinion have drawn, and, my friends, what we have got to do is to take the eraser of God's grace and rub out the world's line, and get back to the Jesus line. In other words, we must turn from the surface distinctions to the real distinctions; from Dunn and Bradstreet to the Bible. For the word of God knows nothing of three stories of society, and woe be unto the Church if she pays any attention to them. I have no ambition to have it said of any church of mine that it is a church of millionaires, where a Galilean Carpenter would not be welcome; but rather do I wish it written over my church: "The rich and the poor meet together. The Lord is the maker of them all." Dean Hodges of Cambridge tells of a Christian woman and a society leader who said to him she had had a remarkable experience that day; she had met a carpenter on the street, and she forgot about his rough hands and soiled clothes in his interesting conversation. And Dean Hodges added, in his kindly but searching humour: "What if it had been the Carpenter of Nazareth?"

Consider, then, how the war erased class distinctions. Why, the war gave the democracy of Jesus Christ a chance to break loose in the world. In England, for example, society ladies have done all sorts of dirty work in hospitals, and have found new meaning in life. People have carried parcels home from the stores who left it to delivery boys before. College professors and chauffeurs fought side by side,

and each learned that the other was not half so bad as he thought he was.

Lest some of you object that this thing of class distinction has no bearing on religion, let me go back a ways. Do you know the Old Testament has a good deal to say on this question? The sixth chapter of Amos and the third chapter of Isaiah give an awful picture of the waste and extravagance of the rich people in their day. It has often been noted by historians and sociologists how similar conditions were in the eighth century B. C. (say in the time of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah), to those which exist in our own day. Therefore, these old prophets have many messages for the twentieth century about this very matter of class distinctions. Away back in Deuteronomy you find legislation dealing with the problems of poverty, the land question, rates of interest, etc. The third chapter of Micah is a stern arraignment of the rich by this peasant-prophet, who himself had probably suffered under the lash of the oppressor. A minister who has since gone bodily over into Socialism told me once how his church officers objected when he read some of these stirring sermons of the eighth century prophets, and how an elder requested that he preach on a more peaceful and conventional line of thought. When you come on down to the time of Jesus, you find Him to be, as Lowell said, "the first true Democrat who ever breathed." He threw social distinctions to the winds, and horrified the prim and proper who always did the conventional thing. He loved to shock the stand-patter. He always voted with the minority. He was

the first century Non-Conformist. He chose for His associates people like tax-gatherers and lepers and prostitutes. When He set up that revolutionary standard of His, the third-story people were awfully shocked, because that put them down on the street level, and they resented it. The Pharisees held an indignation meeting once, and came to His disciples and said: "Your Master is the limit. First, He talked with a man who is a sinner, and then He dined with a man who is a sinner, and last night He went in and lodged with a man who is a sinner." When you turn to the Book of James, you find that he hits class jealousy an awful blow. He says that those in charge of Christian worship, such as ushers and preachers, must not "take note of the face or person." What a realistic picture is that which he draws in his second chapter! Here are two men who enter the synagogue at the same time. One wears a gold ring and gorgeous apparel. The other is a poor man in vile raiment. James tells you exactly what the average usher will do: "Ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him: 'Sit thou here in a good place;' and say to the poor: 'Stand thou here, or sit here under the footstool.' Are ye not then partial in yourselves?" Probably James had seen this very thing happen in the Jerusalem synagogue.

This brief survey of Scripture references will show that the abolition of caste is one element in the religion of Jesus, and one essential to a holy earth. What we need is to see more through Christ's eyes and wherever the Gospel of the Carpenter has been

fully preached it has leveled the classes and elevated the masses. A man went into the prayer meeting of a Christian Church in Seoul, Korea, where the floor was crowded with 1,200 recent converts. He saw the brother of the king sitting beside the humblest labourer. If you go to Constantinople you can see a building, which is called Robert College. The Russian Ambassador kept Dr. Hamlin for nine years from building that college, for he knew what it would do; and one thing it has done is to make a free Bulgaria. If you go to China, you will see a Republic rising on the ruins of the Manchu Dynasty, and the only thing which explains the Chinese Revolution is the Gospel of the missionaries. As the *Chicago Tribune* said in the first week of the war: "This war is the twilight of the kings. The Western democracy of the people marches Eastward."

The business of Jesus, as I see it, has been to strip off surface distinctions. I can see the Master in fancy as He stands among a group of human beings, and He begins by stripping the colour off their skins; He does not care whether they are red, yellow, black, or white. Then He strips the accent off their tongues; He does not care whether they speak English, German, or French. Then He strips the check-book out of their pockets; He does not care whether they are rich or poor. Then He strips the Past loose from the Present; He does not care whether they have a police record, or a family tree. After He gets all the trimmings off He faces the crowd, all brother men, and says: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." I remember reading how, during the

South African war, a Boer marksman shot a Connaught ranger on the banks of the river Tugela. The Boer set about stripping the soldier of his clothes. He took off the great coat and loosened the tunic, and then saw lying on the breast of the dead soldier a crucifix. He stood still, looking down at it. There stretched a great gulf between the Puritan soldier and the Irish papist, but something bridged the gulf, and that something was the Cross of Christ. The Boer stood looking down at the crucifix for a while, and then took the coat and covered the poor body again, and walked away. He could do no indignity to the brother for whom Christ died. Even so shall the Gospel of the Cross be the bridge on which men shall tramp over to the promised land of Brotherhood into the New Day that is to be.

II. A New Emphasis on Justice.

All through the history of the world, Justice has been having a hard struggle for its life. Autocracy and Imperialism and Graft are not the inventions of the twentieth century. If you think so, open the pages of the Word of God and you will be disillusioned. The Pulpit has thundered against the Throne before now. Nathan denounced David for planning the temple, and for killing Uriah and marrying Bathsheba. Gad reproved David for taking the census. Ahijah incited revolt against Solomon. A nameless prophet from Judah denounced Jeroboam for his false worship. Among other preachers who protested against royal invasion of the people's rights were Shemaiah, Jehu, Elijah, and Elisha.

The situation in Micah's day was very much like that of to-day. He saw that the weak and the poor could not obtain justice at the courts. The old tribal elders who sympathized with the peasants had disappeared, and in their place had come the princes appointed by the king, whose sole ambition was to get rich quickly. Class prejudice made them side with the rich and accept bribes. Then as now, the poor and oppressed, seeing they could not get their rights in a legal way, felt that they must take matters into their own hands and redress their wrongs by violence. The consequence was that repeated revolutions and a state of anarchy were the order of the day. The twentieth century *after* Christ was thus anticipated by the eighth century *before* Him.

Isaiah, it seems to me, in his first chapter has a message for our time. He opposed the politicians. When they sought to insure the future of the nation by means of alliances with Assyria or Egypt, Isaiah advised trust in God as the only means of safety. He said that when the fiery trial is passed, a new order of just judges and counsellors will be established, and Zion shall be called the city of righteousness. So he referred the people to God as the ultimate Source of prosperity and justice. Emerson in his day did the same thing. Listen to these words in the light of the trenches: "Secret retributions are always restoring the level of the divine justice. It is impossible to tilt the beam. All the tyrants and proprietors and monopolists of the world in vain set their shoulders to heave the bar. Settles evermore the ponderous equator to its line." Mr. Melville D.

Post more recently in a current magazine has said the same thing. In a series of articles in the *Saturday Evening Post* some time ago, he told of a number of mysterious criminal cases that baffled the wits of even the shrewd officers. But in every instance, sooner or later the offender was detected, and after reviewing all the testimony Mr. Post closed his final article with the expression of the opinion that the unguarded points which these criminals left might by some people be considered the vagaries of chance, but it looked as though they were the agencies of some overruling Authority set on ultimate justice. There is one brief utterance of the Psalms which I would commend to the attention of demagogues everywhere: "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth."

"By night and day, o'er land and sea,
His silent couriers run;
And soon or late, as sure as Fate,
God's justice will be done."

III. A New Theory of the State.

Aristotle said there were three kinds of government: Monarchy, in which the rule was vested in one person; Aristocracy, where it was vested in a few; and Democracy, where it was vested in the whole people. Broadly speaking, we may say there are only two kinds of government and two theories of government in the world, Aristotle's three being reducible to two. The world war was waged to determine which of these theories is correct. The one which we call Autocracy, or Monarchy, assumes that

the Monarch is the State, ruling by divine command and saying with Louis XIV: "The State? *I* am the State." No devil's lie in the history of the world has caused so much harm as this pagan view of the State. If we grant this premise, then the divine right of kings, and the legitimacy of war, and the supremacy of force, follow as naturally as day follows night. If this idea is correct, then the State is an inhuman monstrosity, and I should join the I. W. W.'s in their demand that the State be overthrown, for government would be synonymous with tyranny.

The other theory stands at the antipodes from this one: It says with Plato that the end for which a State exists is Justice. It says with Lincoln that no man, however good, is fit to govern another man without the latter's consent. It says with Woodrow Wilson that the little powers of the world, the Czechs, the Slovaks, the Poles, and the Ruthenians, shall be allowed to choose under what form of government they shall live. It says that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. It says, "I believe in His Majesty, the People, the Demos." It says that the State expresses the will and the preference of a free and sovereign people. It refers to the State not so much as a power, but rather as a brotherhood.

The contrast between these two theories has been illustrated by Dr. Barton by two contrasted speeches: those of the former Emperor of Germany, and of our great ex-President Lincoln, each man addressing the soldiers as their commander-in-chief. The German Emperor told his men they were to have no will of

their own. They were all to have one will, and that was his. The President, speaking to a regiment on their way to the front in 1864, said: "I happen temporarily to occupy this White House. I am a living witness that any of your children may look to come here as my father's child has." When the Kaiser heard of a mother who had lost nine sons in the German army, he wrote her a grandiloquent letter of consolation and sent her his photograph. When Mr. Lincoln heard of a Mrs. Bixby who had lost five sons in the Civil War, he wrote that wonderful Bixby letter which is the finest example of English in so many words that I know.

Now then, my brethren, there is only one question here for us this morning: not which is the nicer of these two theories, or the more efficient, but which is the more Christian; which one would Christ approve? No fair-minded thinker can hesitate long to answer that. Lord Acton has said that modern Democratic government came out of the Lutheran Reformation by way of the French Revolution, and the Reformation came out of Luther, and Luther came out of Paul, and Paul came out of Jesus Christ. So you can trace modern political liberty directly back to Christ. As I see it, Jesus Christ is longing, my friends, to get His hand on the State, as well as on the individual. I believe if the Master could once show the world a great Christian State, He would see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. Mr. Lecky has truly said that Christianity has been more successful in dealing with individuals than with communities. That is true. There has never been a real

Christian commonwealth. There have been small Christian communities where the ideal has been aimed at, as in some of the Anabaptist settlements, especially in Monrovia after the Reformation; but for the most part, Christian States have been dominated by selfish worldly standards, as we know only too well. So that what we need in the twentieth century is a Christianized Christendom; and my pride is that America gave to the world the first illustration in history of a great world power asking itself, "What would Jesus do?" God help us not to give up the fight until Jesus Christ shall be Lord not merely of our souls, but Lord of lords and King of kings.

IV. A New Conception of Giving.

Strange as it may seem, the very day I was writing this sermon there came to me through the mail the fifth number of *Missionary Ammunition*, and the title of this number was, "The Money Test." As I read its page after page of wonderful instances of sacrificial giving, I said, "Certainly I am in the right if I say that one of the characteristics of this new earth is to be a new conception of giving." On one page I read these words: "This war has been the greatest educator in beneficence which the world has ever seen. As a California man put it, 'This war has not only unlocked the money chests of rich men, but it has smashed the locks and the hinges.'" That is true. I recall that one May, while on a lecture trip out of the city, I met one of the travelling collectors of the Methodist Education Fund. To my surprise, I found that he had secured several thousand dollars

in the little town where we had been. As we stood at a small out-of-the-way junction, he pointed to a frame grocery store at the cross-roads, and said, "I got a hundred dollars there." I would have thought he would have been lucky to get fifty cents. A certain city pastor faced a missionary who wanted to make an appeal, with these words: "My people are being bled to death in these days." And yet, this man's church a few months later contributed more for Red Cross, Y. M. C. A., and Y. W. C. A. war work than this pastor ever dreamed possible, and did it with ease and joy. Something is happening, my friends, and that something is this: We are getting new standards of giving; and one almost begins to believe that maybe Jesus was half-way right when He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Some ten years ago the pastor of a very wealthy church placed over his pulpit the motto of the Laymen's Missionary Movement: "Not how much of my money I will give to God, but how much of God's money will I keep for myself." The striking statement began to do its work. A rich woman, not in sympathy with missions, came to the pastor and said: "I wish you would put that sign away. It offends my æsthetic taste, and is not in keeping with the beautiful surroundings." Technically she was correct; but something else was hurt beside her taste, and that was her conscience. She was beginning to get a new vision of giving. Finally she said: "I will give you five hundred dollars if you will remove it." "That is not enough," said the pastor. "That is worth a missionary a year." On asking how much a mission-

ary would cost, and on being told that twelve hundred dollars a year was necessary, she agreed to give it. The motto was then removed to the Sunday-school room, where it began to do its quiet work again. But the woman had learned the lesson of stewardship, and since that time has given \$50,000 for local charity, and still supports her missionary beside.

Now, what do you think of this new earth which I have briefly sketched? Do you want to live there? If so, take a hand and help to bring it about. This new Utopia will not drop down from the skies like a ready-made paradise. It will be manufactured out of the toil of human hands, and the sacrifice and sympathy of human hearts. Let us, then, see if we can persuade heaven to get a little nearer to earth than it has been heretofore. Some of the old Jewish fathers in the first century drew a picture of the new earth in which the trees would be so fruitful that they would bear ripe fruit every day. The righteous were to feast upon cake, and clothe themselves in silk. God would serve a banquet of sea-monsters and oxen from paradise, and mammoth birds, and a glorious wine which had been stored up from the beginning of the world. Those were some of the delights held out to the faithful. I offer you no such attractive menu or program, but simply the chance of rebuilding civilization up into a better world than the one we had before the war.

“To the work, to the work, then, ye servants of God,
Let us follow the path that our Master has trod;
With the balm of His counsel our strength to renew
Let us do with our might what our hands find to do!”

II

THE BREATH OF THE NEW DAY

"Till the day break (breathe), and the shadows flee away."

—SONG OF SOLOMON 2:17.

I SHALL not occupy your time this morning with a laboured exegesis of the setting of the text. There are so many interpretations of the Song of Solomon that we should have to spend too much time in the vestibule. Let me invite you right into the drawing-room of this beautiful sentence. Something is going to last, we are told, until the day break (or breathe, as the Hebrew has it), and the shadows flee away.

Daybreak is a wonderful time. It is the victory of light over the retiring forces of darkness. The shadows of night have held the field for several hours, and have come to regard it as their own. But when the shining battalions of day march on the field, the serried ranks of murky warriors break and flee. If you have ever watched the battle, you know that your sympathies are always with the invaders rather than with the pursued. Well, now I believe, my brothers and sisters, that the world to-day in the year of God's grace 1920 is moving out of shadow into morn. The glorious kiss of dawn is on the eastern sky. Even as I have stood on the Jericho road and watched God painting red on the Syrian sky over the hills of Moab, so I think I can stand on the Avenue of Re-creation

and Renovation, and see God, like a divine flagman or heavenly traffic officer, waving away the dark and waving in the day.

I think I can describe the night by one word, Selfishness; and the dawn by one word, Altruism. If I am not mistaken, the funeral we are witnessing is the burial of Egoism, and the birth is the birth of Otherism. In other words, you have the suicide of Selfishness, and the incarnation of Love. Now, if the race is to endure, this is a biological as well as a moral necessity. One of the oldest truths in existence, older than Christianity, older than the Bible, older than humanity, is that Love is Life. Take the microscope, and peer down into the smallest level of life observable, and there you will see in the act of cell division that the welfare of the species depends on the sacrifice of the individual. In every normal organism the living cells are every hour performing the act of self-sacrifice for the good of the whole organism. When you come up as high as the human body, you find 26,000,000,000,000 cells, all in a great corporation, not one of which is living for itself alone. Now, if Love and Service and Sacrifice are the laws of life down on the biological scale, they are equally the conditions of life up on the human and spiritual plane. So that Jesus Christ was biologically accurate, as well as theologically correct when He said: "He that keepeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

Philosophy adds its word to that of Science. Some of the English moralists of the eighteenth century debated this question, and the two conflicting views held

were these; Mandeville wrote "The Fable of the Bees," in which he tried to show that the well-being of Society rests on the selfish instincts of the individual. He held that greed, and jealousy, and envy, and ambition, are the real roots of all achievements; and that virtue, on the other hand, is merely artificial, or else it is pretense. Shaftesbury took the other viewpoint, that man is really a social being, and no individual is, as Lowell said, whole in himself. Man is so constituted that he cannot seek his own good without seeking the good of the whole system to which he belongs. Shaftesbury was the first writer to suggest this idea of a moral sense, a doctrine which is such an important element of our thinking to-day.

The same difference of viewpoint is seen between Aristotle and Jesus of Nazareth. Aristotle held that man happy who receives emoluments and honours, and that man unhappy who is compelled to give instead of receive. Jesus, strange to say, reverses the currents of procedure, and said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Civilization is now testing whether Mandeville or Shaftesbury, Aristotle or Jesus Christ, is right. On the one side of the question are such witnesses as Cæsar, Charlemagne, Napoleon, and William II; on the other, such witnesses as Stephen, Socrates, Joan of Arc, Paul, and Jesus of Nazareth. The world must act as judge, and impanel a jury and pronounce the verdict. You are out in the court-room looking on. In order to help you come to a conclusion, let me give you four different pictures of this conflict. I am called in to testify, and I shall undertake to show that in four

different spheres Selfishness has been put to flight, and the New Day has won.

I. There is the Shadow of Personal Selfishness, or Individualism.

Observers from the battle-fields of Europe have brought back word that when men's thoughts are dominated by a sense of responsibility for others, fear always vanishes. Now, this is a fact which Science easily explains. Fear is one of the selfish emotions; that is to say, it is one of the principal impulses to self-protection. As long as you can keep an animal or a man thinking about self-protection and self-interest, fear and hate will be present. But just as soon as consciousness becomes dominated by interest in the welfare of others, courage supplants fear. We know how a dog fights for his master, and a mother for her child. Now then, following this clue a little further, we discover that fear depresses and weakens human life—is a negative emotion, while altruism strengthens and elevates—is a positive emotion. Ah, now we understand why Paul told those Corinthians to seek one another's good. This is why Jonathan gave David his sword, and Abraham gave Lot his choice, and Christ gave the world His life.

The shadow is lifting from the broader battle-fields of life, as well as from the fields of Flanders and France. Men are living out the parable of the grain. They find that the living grain is very lonely, but the dying grain brings forth much fruit. So Marshall Wilder believed. He went up to George Wharton James as they stood together behind the scenes just

before he went out on the stage to do his turn. He was suffering excruciating agony, as he often did, from his frail and deformed body, and the sweat was pouring down his cheek. "Put your arms around me and love me tight, George," he gasped, and Mr. James did so. He gripped his friend with fierce intensity, and then, wiping his brow and face with a brave but ghastly smile, rushed upon the stage, and in a moment had his audience laughing at his quips and jokes. By making some one else happy, he forgot himself. So Wilberforce also did. He was so busy helping the downtrodden slaves that an inquisitive lady one day said to him: "Mr. Wilberforce, aren't you afraid you will neglect your own soul in the midst of your work for others?" To which he replied: "You are quite right, Madam. I had forgotten that I had a soul." Brave old Bishop! He was willing to risk God's mercy on his own soul, while he spent himself for others.

Nobody crowns with a halo the selfish life. Jesus never said, "Blessed are they that spare themselves, for they shall be safe and sweet and have a manicured soul." No, but He did say many a time, "Blessed are they that fling themselves away for a noble cause, for they shall be immortal." The rosebud that shuts in on itself is soon black at the heart; but the flower that gives its beauty to the passer-by, and its fragrance to the breeze, is red with the glow of life. Mr. Bryan has compared the two types of life to the buzzard and the bee. The buzzard soars high, but it never soars so high but that it is thinking of itself and looking for something to eat, and when it dies it

leaves nothing but its own body; while the bee produces more than it consumes, and leaves a legacy of honey when it dies. Who wants to be a buzzard? Nobody loves a buzzard. It is too lonely a life. The Central Powers of Europe have adopted the philosophy of the buzzard for themselves, and where are they to-day? Echo answers, "Where?" They are somewhat like the lady in "Stamboul Nights" who lived alone, but in order to have company she had her house filled with mirrors, and whichever way she turned she saw herself. Rowland Sill sat down and wrote to a friend something like this: "For my part, I long to fall in with somebody. This picket duty is monotonous. I hanker after a shoulder on this side and on the other." Well, we all do. I don't know about abnormal people, but normal human folks have what Henry James called a "contributing and participating view of life." Thomas à Kempis wrote the doom of the black selfish life in this way: "He who seeks his own loses the things in common."

Do you know, I was surprised at the Bible's modern viewpoint on this matter of selfishness when I turned to the topic the other day. The first illustration that met my eye was this: Hoarding Foodstuff. Proverbs 11:26. "He that withholdeth corn the people shall curse him, but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it." There you have the condemnation of the food profiteer away back in Solomon's time. What think you was the second? Greed for Real Estate. Isaiah 5:8. "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone

in the midst of the earth!" You see, land magnates, a perfect description of the baronial and junker class of Germany. Here was the third: Total disregard of the rights of others. Ezekiel 34:18. "Seemeth it a small thing unto you to have eaten up the good pasture, but ye must tread down with your feet the residue of the pastures? and to have drunk of the deep waters, but ye must foul the residue with your feet?" How about Germany's poisoning the water supply of the French and Flemish cities? Here was the last: Neglect of the needy and suffering. Matthew 25:43. "I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not: sick and in prison, and ye visited me not." This for the people who sink hospital ships, and dynamite sick and dying men, and crucify babies, and defile the earth with their presence. Have I not cited enough to show you that the sins of the black night of European diplomacy are sins of Selfishness? But the day is breaking. Watchman, what of the night? Cheer up, the morning cometh, and in its winged chariot comes peace to men of good will.

II. There is the Shadow of Civic Selfishness: Nationalism.

I believe that the Nation or State is one of the mile-stones on the avenue of human progress, but not the end of the journey. We so often make the mistake of imagining that because a caravan halts a long time at a certain tavern, that is as far as it is going. As you look back along the roadway of Evolution, first there is the mile-stone of the Individual, then

the mile-stone of the Family, then that of the Tribe, and finally that of the Nation. Well, is the journey done? There is where we have been standing for many years, but the great war is going to push the caravan ahead. The next mile-stone is the mile-stone of the World; or in other words, Internationalism. To show you what I mean, look at the ancient Jews. They stopped at the mile-stone of the Nation, and refused to march on. God wanted them to wait there for a while. He elected them as His chosen people. But mark this: it was an election not to privilege, but to service. So when the day came for them to march beyond their boundary, God sent Jonah to Nineveh, and Philip to Samaria and Gaza, and Paul to Asia Minor and Rome, and Jesus to Galilee and Samaria and Calvary, and through the cross to the whole world. So you see that God regards the Nation as a good enough stopping place, but not the goal. Just as the chambered nautilus continually outgrew its old quarters and built itself a larger home, leaving its outgrown shell by Time's unresting sea, so must humanity do; and the State is one of these outgrown shells, and we must leave it by the wayside and "carry on."

Professor Dewey has shown in a recent book that while national considerations are important, moral considerations are more important. We have got to change the old slogan, "My Country, right or wrong," and now phrase it, "My Country must be right, and not wrong." If the world war was caused by the protective tariff, as some tell us, then let us have free trade. Prof. Franklin H. Giddings has said:

"Until the nations are ready for world-wide free trade, they will waste their breath in praying for world peace." The author of "The Audacious War" writes: "The sentiment under a protective tariff is national selfishness." Well, brethren, if this be true, we must revise our schedules, for no nation liveth unto itself any more, and none dieth unto itself. Hear an Indian gentleman's explanation of "The Root Cause of the Great War," as he calls his book. He finds the cause of the war is the Darwinian theory of the survival of the fittest, and claims that the new light which can dissipate the old darkness must come from the East, as light usually does; from the East with its ideals of altruism and mysticism. I would agree with him that it must come from the East, but if you ask me where in the East, I would say not from India, but from Calvary.

As I look into the New Day ahead, I see the Christianizing of the State. Why should not the Nation be converted? It is only an enlarged individual. Jesus Christ is big enough to dominate 100,000,000 people as well as one person. I think Jesus has often lived over again the fourteenth chapter of Luke, as He has seen the nations elbowing one another out of one sphere of influence into another. You remember how Jesus poked some quiet humour at His fellow guests at one dinner to which He was invited. The Greek says: "He began to tell the guests a story with a meaning, for He noticed how they were picking out the chief seats." Jesus said to them: "If you really want a good seat, go and sit at the bottom place, for as the last man keeps on moving up, he

will finally reach the top place." There are three stages, you see, in the evolution of good manners, both for the individual and the nation. The first stage is push and thrust, like the beasts. The second stage is concealed selfishness, or so-called good manners. The third stage is self-forgetfulness, or altruism. The nations have stopped in the first and second stages, and Jesus is begging them to go on to the third. God grant that they may!

Any one could fill a volume with stories of the night, the night of national selfishness. Think of America's treatment of the Red man, the Black man, or the Yellow man, and ask if America has acted like a White man. England forced opium on China, and Russia persecuted the Jews. Belgium committed atrocities in the rubber regions of the Congo, and Germany stole Alsace Lorraine. Great Britain went down into Africa with the cry "Avenge Majuba" on her lips, and Italy swooped down on Tripoli more in the fashion of an eagle or a buzzard than a peace dove. The "balance of power" has kept Christian nations with their hands tied, while Turkey has gone on massacring the Armenians and the Syrians. So that one of the first things necessary is a Christianized Christendom, and it begins to look as though that were being done when you see the Sermon on the Mount finding place in diplomatic notes. It is said that when Blücher came to London after the battle of Waterloo, to see what the world's metropolis was like, among other sights they showed him was the view from the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral. The narrator tells us that when the distinguished warrior

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looked forth upon the expanse of throbbing life the blood came into his face, and forgetting himself he cried out, "Oh, what a place for plunder!" That is the old régime for you. That is last night, the night of the old world. But that is not to-morrow. No! A new day is about to be born. One of our great Presidents said in an anniversary address: "Selfishness never keeps a centennial; it is too soon extinct." So let us have no centennial of the war, for that would be a centennial of selfishness and plunder; but let us have many happy returns of the New Day.—

"The day of rest and gladness, The day of joy and light,
The balm of care and sadness, Most beautiful, most
bright!"

III. The Shadow of Ecclesiastical Selfishness, or Denominationalism.

I don't know just when Denominationalism arose, but I do know that we find a surprisingly early example of it in the Church at Corinth. You find this referred to in the first chapter of First Corinthians. Paul states that certain informants have told him that there were as many as four parties in the Corinthian Church. There was the Paul party, and the Apollos party, and the Peter party, and the Christ party. I can imagine how these divisions might have arisen. I can fancy one brother would say: "Well, I am for Paul. He is the missionary who started this work going, and I think we ought to be called the Pauline Memorial Church." Here would be another brother who would say: "Well, I am for Apollos. I was carried away with his eloquent preaching, and I, for

one, am an Apollinarian." Here would be a third who might say: "Well, I am for calling the Church after Peter, for he defended the faith in those wonderful sermons of his before Paul was ever heard of in the Church, and I think it is a shame to pass by Peter and honour Paul." Then here would be the fourth brother, corresponding to some folks to-day, who would say: "Let us forget all our divisive names, and call ourselves the Christian Church. I am for Christ. Let all human leaders go." So the divisions rose, and this fourth party was just as much denominational as the rest, only it wanted a more inclusive name.

Denominationalism, then, is no new thing, and has not been an unmitigated evil—not at all. The denominations represent differences of temperament as well as interpretation. You take an average Christian—let us suppose you find him a Presbyterian. Add a little more starch, and he will become an Episcopalian. Add still more, and he will become a Romanist. On the other hand, if instead of starch you add water, he will become a Baptist; and if you add still more water, a Campbellite. Broaden him out by flattening him so thin that there will not be much thickness left to his theology, and he becomes a Unitarian or a Universalist. Expose him to all changes of temperature—heat and cold and double positions, as the watchmakers do with their watch tests, and if he comes through them all alive he is a Christian Scientist. And so we might go on. If this is true, then, as long as people are human there will be varieties of temperament and ecclesiastical

preference. Surely it is better that those who prefer the liturgical service should be by themselves, and those who prefer the simple service by themselves, rather than that they should be all altogether and continually get on one another's nerves. So I can easily see, as you can, that Denominationalism has its advantages. People have different tastes in politics, in food, and in amusements, and it is not strange that they should have different tastes in theology.

The trouble comes when we take the foot-note, the parenthesis, and make it the main thing. Denominationalism is secondary to the Kingdom of Christ, and when we reverse the order we get into trouble. Sidney Lanier describes this condition of things in his "Remonstrance." In it he demands that Opinion let him alone, and cease to feature his Lord by rule and line. He attempts to join one group of worshippers, but they reject his presence:

"Save to our rubric thou subscribe, and swear
Religion hath blue eyes and yellow hair,
She's Saxon all."

Then, still hungry for fellowship, he turns to a second group, who thus reply:

"Nay, not with me, save thou subscribe, and swear
Religion hath black eyes and raven hair,
Naught else is true."

And then the poet turns indignant upon Opinion, which would usurp the place of Faith, and calls him an assassin and a thief:

"Thou savest Barabbas in that hideous hour,
And stabbest the good Deliverer Christ."

Glance at the facts of Denominationalism for a moment. There are 201 denominations in this country of ours. There are six different kinds of Adventists, fifteen kinds of Baptists, ten varieties of Catholics, twenty-one types of Lutherans, sixteen brands of Methodists, twelve sorts of Presbyterians, twelve kind of Mennonites, etc. It seems to me that by close economy we could get along without quite so many. The differences between some of these branches remind one of Lloyd George's famous bon mot. He was driving through northern Wales with a famous Free Churchman, and the conversation turned on denominational differences. "The Church to which I belong," said the famous statesman, "is torn with a fierce dispute. One part says that Baptism is *in* the name of the Father, and the other that it is *into* the name of the Father, etc. I belong to one of these parties. I feel most strongly about it. I would die for it. But I forget which it is." This speech illustrates the fact that many of the differences which divide us are unworthy of the great day of federation and coöperation and alliance in which we live. I firmly believe that one result of the great war is going to be a closer approximation to the great brigading together of the Christian forces than we have ever had before. If Marshal Foch could unite our soldiers, why can't Jesus Christ unite our Christians? He is leading in a far greater warfare, against an enemy a thousand times as fierce as Berlin. The poison gas is on us, and we would fain turn from it. But cheer up, discouraged Christian workers! The day is breaking and the night is gone.

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Say to the forces of Evil in the name of a united Church, "You shall not pass." And when the Devil and his cohorts find that the Christians are getting together, they will sign an armistice of unconditional surrender. For Jesus Christ has promised not to any one denomination, but to His Church, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

IV. There is the Shadow of Religious Selfishness or Atheism.

Here is the last step in the process. Just as the world has gone beyond personal selfishness into brotherhood, beyond State selfishness into Internationalism, beyond Church selfishness into the Kingdom of God, so may we not hope that humanity will go beyond soul selfishness into harmony with the God and Father of our spirits, and His Son Jesus Christ? We cannot live unto ourselves, and if we cannot live without one another, we certainly cannot live without God. This is the tragic Atheism. I am not talking about the Atheism which is a theological fact, but a moral fact. I am talking about banishing God from our horizon, and setting up in business for ourselves in an orphaned world.

What I mean is put into beautiful form by the Persian legend which tells of a lover who knocked at the door of his beloved and craved admission. "Who is there?" asked a voice from within. "It is I," said the lover. But the voice gave answer, "There is no room in the house for thee and me." So the lover went away, and wandered for a year in the wilderness, and came once again to the door.

"Who is there?" said the voice. And this time he answered, "It is thyself"; and the door was opened. He had so identified his will and personality with that of his beloved that he could say, "I am thyself," and she let him in. So ought humanity to march out of its little things into the tremendous domains of the love of God.

I believe that many men have rediscovered God in these stern days of flood and fire, Professor Leuba to the contrary notwithstanding. He thought he discovered a few years ago that American men of science, real cultured men, did not believe in a personal God, and he said the more eminent the men were, the less they believed in God. Well, if Atheism was ever at a premium, it is not now. The old Sophist who was expelled from Athens for heresy, and whose book began with the words, "Of the gods, I know not whether they are or are not," and was burned in the market-place,—has not found any great following. Epicureanism, with its jaunty way of looking at life through rose-coloured glasses, may do well enough for times of piping peace, especially when it tells us that the gods do not concern themselves at all with the present world, and therefore we must not fear the gods or dread death. But beyond all your science and philosophy, when men find themselves up against the circumstances of a world like this, they are mighty prone to ask: "Is there a God? Does He care? And if so, is He able to do as He wills?" Hence, I believe that God is going to have His rightful place in the New Days that are to be; that He will be not merely a theological postulate, a convenient

axiom, or a national party cry, but a Real Discovery to a world which has been through the conflict, and has been purified as by fire.

I wonder if I have said anything to send you away to-day with a morning heart. We ought to have springtime souls, for the old order is dead, and beyond Death always comes Resurrection. Have you an April heart to-day? Oh, get out into the optimism of faith, and believe in the breaking day. Can't you see the old shadows packing up their tents and making off into the night, leaving the field to us children of the sunshine? Oh, my brothers and sisters, I believe in the God of the dawn. Slowly the Father lifts the curtain on the sunlit surprises of the world's great Christmas Day, and among the Christmas gifts I think I see the things I have mentioned to-day. During the influenza epidemic a certain service was allowed in the open air, provided the worshippers would sit two feet apart. Men have been doing that thing long enough. Individuals have sat two feet apart, nations two feet apart, churches two feet apart, men and God two feet apart. But no such orders are to be issued in the New Day. Rather, the ordinance must read that men will be permitted to do so and so provided they will be sweethearts, provided they will fall in love with each other, and fall in love with God. Such is the vision which I would leave with you. And once again I turn to the dear old words with which I began: "My beloved is mine, and I am his. He feedeth among the lilies, until the day break, and the shadows flee away."

III

THE STARS BEYOND THE SMOKE

"Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord."—ISAIAH 43: 10.

"Ye shall be witnesses unto me."—ACTS 1: 8.

I WANT to bring together two texts this morning, one from the Old Testament and the other from the New, and set them down side by side for purposes of comparison. One interesting thing about the Bible is that you can take texts from the most distant books and set them down side by side, and they do not conflict. The first of my two texts is from the Book of Isaiah, and I read these words: "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord." The second of the two is from the Book of Acts, and I read, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me." Now here they are, one from the eighth century B. C., and the other from the first century A. D. One is spoken by the great prophet of the Old Testament, the other by the great Prophet of the New Testament. One is to Jews and the other to Christians. And yet, the same word is used to describe God's Church in both cases, the only difference in the two statements being in the tense. God says, "Ye are my witnesses;" and Christ says, "Ye shall be mine." Now, this change in tense is significant. Bring the application down to the modern Church in the twentieth century. The Church today is a witness unto God. Yes, that is true. But the Christ of these great days of Reconstruction

throws it into the future tense and says: "I am not satisfied with the present-day witnessing. You have got to be bigger and better witnesses in the future than you have ever been in the past." And so as the Master faces these new days, I seem to hear Him saying to the Church of America: "Ye shall be witnesses unto me in the United States, and in Canada, and in Mexico, and in devastated France, and in Armenia and Syria, and all foreign lands, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

Now, let us look into this word "witness." My count shows that the word is used 179 times in the Word of God. Let me take it up and look at it to see if I can discover more fully what my two texts mean. The fact is that very few documents were used in ancient times, but business contracts were made in public at the gates of cities, and some formal ceremony had to be gone through which witnesses might observe and recall in after years. The procedure was very simple. The courts were held in the open. Each side, accused and accuser, stated its case. The accuser stood at the right hand of the accused, who frequently wore a mourning garb. Two or three witnesses were summoned, who testified on oath, and the very heaviest penalties were inflicted for false witnessing or bribing of judges. Loyalty to truth was never a prominent virtue among Asiatic peoples, and hence one of our Ten Commandments forbids the practice of false witnessing. Now the witnesses, in case of the death penalty, were the first to lay their hands on the condemned man and to execute the sentence. Josephus says that

women and children were excluded from giving testimony by the Mosaic Law, and this may have been partly on account of the above custom. This brief survey of ancient customs will prepare us for a word about modern times. In our modern law courts attendance as a witness is a compulsory duty, and the presence of any person for the purpose of acting as a witness can be compelled by law. If a witness does not attend at the time and place mentioned, he is liable to be punished either by imprisonment or fine. "Any person is compelled to become a witness who has sufficient mental capacity to understand the nature of an oath and the nature of the matters about which he is to testify."

Now, let us go back to our texts. It must be evident that, in the light of the Bible and the law books, witness bearing, or the giving of testimony, is a supremely important duty. Very well, then, the Church must not neglect its performance. And yet, the history of the Church shows that this privilege has often been sadly forgotten. Take as just one proof of this statement the rise of Mohammedanism. Bishop Nicholson says that the origin of Islam can be traced to Christian slackers. Once all North Africa was Christian. There were five hundred bishops and countless scholars. But what happened? The Church became self-satisfied and exclusive. "We live in a different world," said Cyprian; "we draw to ourselves, and feast our souls on the vision of God." That was their mistake. While they were eaten up with egotism, there were hungry souls out in the desert. While the Church was quibbling over

theological puzzles, a crafty fellow took the Old Testament out in the desert and brought forth the Koran. Mohammedanism need not have cursed the world had the Church been faithful to its testimony.

Let me use this as a parable. Again the Church has its scholars and dignitaries. Once again the world is a desert full of hungry souls waiting to be fed with the Bread of Life. What shall we do? Well, there are just two roads we may take, and you find them both in the story of the loaves and fishes. One is the road of selfishness; the other, the road of service. The first says: "Send the people away that they may buy bread; it is not our business to feed them. The Church did not start the war. The world did. Let the world finish it. We will go on with our meditations." But the other answer is the way of the great Master: "They need not depart. Give ye them to eat." Oh, Church! The world of war-sick people need not go elsewhere for guidance. Give ye them to eat. You have not only five loaves and two fishes. You have the Book of Life. Answer their pleading call. Swing your doors outward instead of inward. Don't build a sound-proof wall between yourselves and the desert. Sing out your anthems of Renewal and Reconstruction. Find a path through the maze. Give them a few great standards by which to measure Truth. Exhibit a few familiar landmarks in the landscape which has been upset by the cyclone. Hang out a few stars beyond the smoke. "Be my witnesses," saith the Lord. Let me suggest three or four elements of the Church's testimony.

I. One Great Word the Church Should Emphasize is Righteousness.

You know how repeatedly during the early stages of the war the question was asked: "What are we fighting for? Somebody please tell us what all this is about. Are we like boys at play who tussle just for the fun of it, just to show our new uniforms or try our new guns? Or are we really trying to get somewhere? If so, somebody please tell us where we are trying to go. We don't mind fighting down in the mud if we are on our way to the stars, but we insist on seeing the stars through the mist. Beyond the real must be the ideal. This business of killing we are engaged in is not the ultimate. This is just the wilderness leading to the promised land. But tell us more about this promised land." You remember how often this was heard in the early days of conflict, and how in response to this universal call the leading spokesmen of the world on both sides of the conflict set down on paper some of the things they were fighting for. It may not be generally known that eighteen months after the war began the British Government appointed a committee to study the problems of Reconstruction. This was not due to any illusions that the war was nearly over, but simply a wise desire to prepare beforehand for ultimate days of peace. So in the same way, the Church lifted its hand above the smoke and said to the warring peoples: "Listen to my voice. Stop the machine guns one moment. Don't lose your soul down there in the battle. Remember you are fighting for righteousness, for the rule of Right rather than Might."

Let us consider this a moment. Righteousness is one of the great notes of the Scripture piano which is struck time and again. The Hebrew words for righteousness in the Old Testament signified rightness; that is the righteous man is a man who is right with God. Now, the eighth century prophets said the same thing in different words. They taught ethical monotheism for the first time in history. God is one, and God is holy. Hence, since God is righteous, He demands righteousness in men. That was their argument. "What doth the Lord require of thee, O man, but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Notice this, my hearers: Right is not simply my side of the question. Right is God's side of the question; and the only way I can be sure I am right is to be perfectly sure I am on God's side. The right thing to do in any issue is the will of God. Hence, these eighth century prophets have a message for us to-day.

Follow the same idea over into the New Testament, and here is what you find. There are three kinds of righteousness taught in the New Testament, and not one only. There is *imputed* righteousness, which means the righteousness God sets down to my account when I accept Christ. There is *imparted* righteousness, which means that by regenerating a man, God by His Spirit gives him a new moral life. Then there is *attained* righteousness, which means that man must win righteousness also by effort. We must work out what God has worked in.

In the light of these facts, if a man has the right philosophy of life, he must believe that righteousness

(or what is the same thing, the Divine Will) shall ultimately prevail in every contest on this earth. Ah, in the dark days of the great conflict, when the line of the Western Front bent so far that it nearly broke, this was the faith which nerved those splendid braves to fight with their backs against the wall, to "carry on" in spite of an enemy armed to the teeth and hard-boiled to the soul. They were somewhat like the young recruit who was reproved by his sergeant. His uniform was on wrong, and he carried his rifle like a hay-fork. So the sergeant said: "Let's see if you can march. Right about face." The recruit, not knowing what the command meant, stood his ground, and heaved a sigh of relief, and stood stock still. "Thank goodness," he said, "I am right about something anyway." Like the young recruit, the Allies stood stock still and said, "They shall not pass." They knew they were right about God's eternal purpose, and straightway they refused to turn right about face. And so the line held, not because our men were stronger, but because it was held by the righteous hand of a holy God. The Psalmist said, "Thy righteousness is like the great mountains," and the enemy stormed that mountain in vain.

"We know that the truth shall triumph,
 That evil shall find its doom;
 That the cause of right, though subdued by might,
 Shall break from the strongest tomb;
 That wrong, though it seems to triumph,
 Lasts only for a day,
 While the cause of truth has eternal youth,
 And shall rule the world for aye!"

II. Another Great Word is Repentance.

Do you see how my second point logically follows the first? What else could follow it? First, the will of God. Right is held up before the nation,—before all nations. Fancy the nations of the twentieth century placing themselves, their selfish diplomacy and their rotten intrigue, up against the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount. What think you they will do? They will blush for shame, and fall upon their knees and cry, "God be merciful to us, sinners." This was the experience of Isaiah: "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord. Then said I, 'Woe is me.'" That is the program of every sincere soul, whether individual or corporate. First, I see God. Then I see myself. And when I see myself I say, "I abhor myself in dust and ashes."

"Well," but you say, "can a nation repent?" Certainly, for a nation is just an enlarged individual. There is a very curious parallel between the ancient Pharisees and the modern Prussians. History, you know, is fond of repeating itself. The Pharisees looked upon their law as a kind of contract with Jehovah, by the terms of which God could be compelled to give the Jews the empire over the whole world as soon as they could succeed in fulfilling the law without a mistake. They had a saying that if the Jews could succeed in keeping two Sabbath days with complete adherence to all ceremonies, then God would be compelled to intervene and set up the empire of the Jews. This intervention was expected to be a stupendous miracle. The heavens were to open, and armies of angelic warriors were to come in chariots

of flame. The Scribes and Pharisees were to be the rulers of the world, and all pious Pharisees who had died were to rise from the dead and live on forever as part of the ruling caste. There were scores of Apocalypses in circulation which expressed this hope. You remember the war literature of the Central Powers, and you see the parallel to which I refer. The "good old German God" was believed to be their special ally, and He was to give them world rule as soon as they cleansed the promised land of their enemies. Hence Germany to-day must be not only beaten, but repentant.

Here, then, is the call for the prophet. The modern prophet must tell the nations just what the eighth century prophets told the Pharisees: that God has no pets, "In every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him." God has no nationality. God cannot be confined within geographical divisions. The Almighty is not interested in geographical lines, but in ethical lines, right and wrong. It makes no difference what the colour of your skin or the shape of your flag may be. You have got to toe the mark of God's holy law, and if you have done wrong as a people, you must repent. "Now if that be treason," said the ancient prophets, and say we to-day, "make the most of it." When the war was two years old, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, realizing the critical issues of the time, decided that a great national mission of repentance and hope was the measure best calculated to meet the needs of Great Britain. And so in the autumn of 1916 the ministers of the Church of Eng-

land went up and down the lands of the crown and called upon the people to repent. There were some who felt at that time that the date was not opportune, and that it would have been easier to wait for the reaction of the peace days for the victorious nation to express its repentance. At any rate, it is high time for us in these days to call the nations to their knees. For as Joseph Hardy said, "The only way a people can really advance is on their knees." Now that the hurrahs of victory have come, lest we lose ourselves in the excitement of our returning soldier boys, let a sense of the awful folly of four wasted years keep us sober. A great international chorus will have to learn the words of Kipling's Recessional:

"The tumult and the shouting dies,
The captains and the kings depart;
Still stands thine ancient sacrifice,
A humble and a contrite heart:
Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget."

III. *The Third Great Word is Sacrifice.*

True repentance leads to sacrifice. False repentance stops in sorrow. That is the difference. Look at the case of Isaiah once more. After humiliation came consecration. "Then said I, 'Woe is me.'" But did he stop there? No, he went on: "Then said I, 'Here am I; send me.'" This is exactly the difference between the two New Testament words for repentance: *metamellomai*, and *metanoia*. If you know which word is used in the Greek New Testament, you can tell whether the repentance is going to get any further than the handkerchief or not. The first one means "to change the

feelings" but the second one means "to change the mind or will." When Catch-my-pal-Patterson gets an audience on its feet to register their resolution concerning the use of strong drink, he does not let them stop with the emotion of anger against drink. He asks them to double up the right fist, punch an imaginary antagonist, and say in unison, "We will see this thing through." It is high time that the Church, instead of stopping half-way on its crusades of Salvation, should double up its fists and say: "We will see this through, the whole program: Righteousness, Repentance, Sacrifice."

The world has a new idea of service since the war. We have been preaching service ever since Jesus practiced it, but somehow the old world kept on saying: "We are not impressed by your sermons. Have you a book of acts?" Then came the war with such incidents as this: Word came to me that the only son in the wealthiest family in the city of my former parish had fallen in France. How often that beautiful estate and mansion were the envy of the passers-by! And yet how aimless seemed the life which was lived in that home, with a succession of teas and receptions and diners-dansants! Then war was declared. The father, who had seen military service years before, went into the army as a general, and the boy, the only son of the home, went into the aviation service and fell at his post. As I thought of it I said: "No amount of wages would have made that father and son go. No appeal to fame would have made them risk their lives. But the call to serve, to serve their country and their fellow-men, pulled them from

the mansion to the trench." Oh, my friends, we need no laboured theology now to explain to people what service means. We can simply say: "Look at the trenches: there is an illustrated sermon, a moving picture, of Service First, and Safety Last."

Ministers themselves, the men whose very title means service, have rediscovered the idea. Recently we read of a clergyman at the front who sold stamps to the glory of God. The Y. M. C. A. with which he was quartered was long on speakers but short one secretary, and the minister consented to substitute at the latter job. But after a few days he was ready to go home. He said: "Any cheap clerk can do this work. It is not big enough for me." The Building Secretary answered: "I am sorry you find no chance to get your message over as you sell your stamps, for I find I can put nearly all of First John into a wink." Then the Secretary sketched the varied avenues of service, and the minister saw a new light. He said, "From this time on I mean to be the postage stamp apostle." And so this man found an evangelistic way of selling stamps. He discovered that ministry is greater than preaching. Our friend, Dr. Selecman, found the same thing. He said there was precious little chance for preaching, but a big opportunity for service; and he, for example, spent three whole days at the dictaphone, getting off some of the letters to the sweethearts and relatives of the soldier boys requested of him. Our other good friend, Dr. Freeman, is spoken of as "the best loved man in France"; and why? Would you know the secret? Here it is. I asked him what he did over there, and he said:

"Better ask me what I didn't do. If there is anything I did not do, I don't know what it is." I was told by another that if there was any task too mean or hard for any one else, they gave it to Freeman, and he did it.

What is all this that I have been saying, brethren, but a commentary on the new idea of service which is taking possession of the world? The magnificent paradoxes of Jesus are not poetry after all, but common sense. A man has only what he gives away, and the harder he works the happier he is. May God hasten the day when this policy of unselfish service shall dominate the home, the store, the city, the state, the nation, and the world! When that time comes, we shall be answering our Lord's Prayer: "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

IV. Another Great Word is Faith.

Many reports from the battle front have told of the singing of birds amid the roar of strife. It is said that when the great guns were roaring and the big shells bursting, the birds could be heard filling in the interim between detonations with their melody. Now, why did they sing? Wasn't it because there, up above the smoke where the air was clear, they could see the sunshine and could know that God still lives, and would still take care of them? Well, then, I wonder if it is not possible for the Christian to rise on wings of faith above the storm and see God above the battle, and hold on to Him. "If, as some one has said, "life is a tragedy to those who think, and

a comedy to those who feel, it is a victory to those who believe." "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Faith can "trace the rainbow through the rain, and feel the promise is not vain, that morn shall tearless be." One of the most suggestive Gospel incidents for the Christian in these reconstruction times is our Lord's conversation with Peter, in which He says: "Satan hath desired thee, that he might sift thee as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen the brethren." Here are three things which our Lord tells Peter, and which He is certainly telling His Church to-day. The first is this: "These are sifting times, and many are being led to believe that God has gone to sleep, or else has resigned His throne. Many are being carried away from their old moorings." The second thing Jesus says to Peter is, "But your faith must not fail, and I am praying for you." If our faith cannot stand the test it will be discounted. The world will say to us: "Oh, don't talk to me about a clear-day religion. Anybody can believe in God on a perfect day in June, when the sky is clear and the roses bloom. What we want is a faith that will weather the winds of November and the snowy blasts of December." Then the third thing Jesus tells Peter is, "When you are once sure of yourself, go out and strengthen others." So, my Christian friends, your supreme task is not merely to be sure of God yourself, but to be an evangelist of conviction and certainty to somebody else whose feet are slipping from the rock, the Rock of Ages.

Some poet has pictured a number of shipwrecked

pilgrims who had found shelter on a little beach, gathered at nightfall, and discussing the losses their lives had known. One bewailed the friends of early days. Another, the money which had once been his. Another, the plans which had gone all awry. And so they went on, one by one.

"But when their tales were done, there stood among them one,

A stranger, seeming from all sorrow free;

'Sad losses ye have met, but mine are sadder yet:

For the believing heart has gone from me.'"

Oh, Church of God! Keep your lamps burning to-day. Don't let the world have to fight its way home in the dark. "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" Take the aeroplane of trust, and soar above the smoke, and tell us what you see up there; and then come down to us in the trenches and behind the lines, and bring us a wireless from heaven which will help us "carry on." Catch some of the calm of heaven, and bring it down to our fevered pillows. Heaven's good Book says that if He giveth peace, no one can make trouble. So, Church of God, while our enemies multiply war without, do thou multiply peace within. Then shall our burdened brothers and sisters be able to say:

"We bless Thee for Thy peace, O God,
Deep as the unfathomed sea,
Which falls like sunshine on the road
Of those who trust in Thee.

"That peace which suffers and is strong,
Trusts where it cannot see,
Deems not the trial-way too long,
But leaves the end with Thee."

IV

THE MINISTRY FOR THE CHURCH OF TO-DAY

"Who am I, O Lord God, that thou hast brought me hitherto?"—2 SAMUEL 7: 18.

WHAT do you think of a man who would sit down in the presence of God? That is what David did in the story before us. He was simply overwhelmed. Nathan had just told him that his dynasty was assured of a long reign, and his house should be established forever. And the king is so filled with emotion that he does a thing which is nowhere else in Scripture said to have been done. He went in and sat down before the Lord, and talked over his problem. He feels his utter unworthiness of the great time in which he lives. And so he passionately exclaims, "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And is this the manner of man, O Lord God? For thou, Lord God, knowest thy servant."

It seems to me, my brethren, that you and I, ministers of Jesus Christ, may well make these words our own, as we find ourselves in the position of moral leadership in the days of rebuilding. Are we big

enough men for our job? The times demand giants, and we dare not be pygmies. Are we able to translate the mind of the Eternal into the language of the people? Can they look up to us, or will they pass us by? Dr. Chapman says these are the greatest days for preaching the world has ever known; and are we measuring up to our opportunity? The Captain of our Salvation has placed us on the moral firing line; and shall we turn and run? The marching orders are clear: "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward." And shall we reply, "I pray thee, have me excused"? God calls for volunteers to carry the war into the enemy's country; and must we answer, "Here am I; send somebody else"? No, we dare not be clerical slackers. As somebody has said, "The exemption of the clergy from military service was either an insult or a challenge." It was an insult if it implied that they were weaklings. But it was a challenge if it meant that the work of the ministry was so important that it was an essential. Let us accept the mighty challenge, and resolve from this good hour that we shall stretch ourselves up to the dimensions of our opportunity: so that in the end we may be able to say, as Paul said to the Romans, "I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ."

A great deal of criticism has been heaped upon the ministry because, forsooth, they have been found wanting in this hour of need. One clergyman writes an article on "Peter sitting by the fire warming himself," and gives the impression that the clergy of the country are lazy old men, equipped with dressing-gown and a pair of easy slippers, lounging in a rock-

ing-chair before a cozy fire. Will any one who knows the facts dare believe this indictment to be true? A very good reply has been made to his article on the subject, "Peter Warmed Up," in which it is pointed out that there was no crime in Peter's warming himself, but the question is, what he did after he got warm. This reminds us of Thoreau, who said: "It is not enough that I collect sticks and make myself a blaze. The point is, what I did after I got warm." Yes, by all means let the prophets of the Lord get warmed up—God help the ecclesiastical refrigerators—and then let them go out and pass on their new-found spiritual temperature to others. Bishop McDowell tells of an eminent scholar of England who a few years ago became for the first time in his life acutely conscious of darkest England and its needs. All his life had been devoted to learning and teaching, and he had not realized how the other half lived. When he finally saw with his own eyes human need and poverty and distress on a large scale, he was overwhelmed. All his scales of values were suddenly upset, and the things he had striven for seemed as naught. In the consciousness of this new discovery he cried aloud: "Greek must go, and scholarship must go, but men must not go; they must be saved." So, my brethren, in these days of reconstruction and earthquake, there are certain things which must go, and certain things which must abide. It is with the idea of indicating to you some of the things which must not be thrown overboard that I venture to speak to you of some of the essential notes of the ministry of the days to come.

I. A Ministry of Comfort.

I had a rich experience one day in October of 1918. It was in connection with the first gold star to come to our flag of 125. Word came to me that the dear brave mother who had told me her Paul was wounded a few days before had received a wire from the Lieutenant saying he was gone. So I went over to the house. The mother met me, brave as a lion. She showed me first the wire that came telling of Paul's being wounded, from him himself. Down in the corner was penciled her reply: "Proud of you. Not worrying at this end. Love. Mother." Then she showed me the second wire, which spoke of the supreme sacrifice. And then, what do you think? She smiled through her tears, and told me that the thing on which she had been living during the days of uncertainty and anxiety was my sermon of the Sunday before. I had preached on "Patient Enthusiasm": "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us:" and I spoke of the endurance which comes from looking unto Jesus. I could see she had it all by heart. How glad I was that I had preached on that theme that day rather than on the sins of the Amalekites or the Imprecatory Psalms! There were many other handclasps beside hers at the close of that sermon; and I remember one man who had been described to me as a Silurian, who broke into tears telling me he was going through deep waters, thanking me for the lift.

Well, my brethren, these things are not new to you. Wasn't it Alexander MacLaren who said that if he had his ministry to go over, he would make one

important change: he would preach more fully than he had a Gospel of Comfort? Do you remember what Lavissee, the greatest historian of France to-day, said when Renan's "Life of Jesus" was published? "It did not interest me," he said, "and one reason was that the Christ of Renan was not a Christ who had comforted men." He conceived the possibility of another life of Jesus which should describe the Christ who had strengthened and cheered men's hearts in every clime and nation of the world. These are the sentiments, by the way, of one of the Freethinkers of France.

God pity us if we fail in this hour. People come to our pulpit stairs and look piteously up and say, "What have you got for a broken heart, O man of God? Is there no balm of Gilead, is there no physician there? If you have anything for us, in God's name give it to us. Do not tantalize our misery by false pretense." What can we say to that appeal? We have a Christ who is adequate for the hour. The question is, has Christ a channel in you and me which is adequate for Him? Give your people the Comfort Chapter, the Fourteenth of John, as an antidote for anxiety. Tell them that the word "comfortless" means orphaned. "I will not leave you orphaned." Make them believe that the world they are living in is not an orphan asylum, but a Christian home. Give them the paregoric of the Gospel. Jean Valjean said he wanted to live "where people say Good Morning to one another." And to-day the broken-hearted want to live where their minister can say to them not merely "Good-

morning," but as the boys used to say in the trenches, "Cheerio:" "Be of good cheer." "Let not your hearts be troubled." "I have overcome the world." "Come unto me."

How close this ministry of comfort will draw us to our people and to our God! I like the spirit of that man who wrote when he was leaving one parish for another: "I find all this immensely costly in wrenched heart-strings. Rare are the homes in which I have not stood bowed in grief with the folks. Few are they, young or old, with whom I have not sat in sacredly close council over serious problems, pains, and joys. . . . Only God is able to comprehend the vastness of that for which the ministry stands in its manhood and message as the saving influence in modern life."

II. A Ministry of Conviction.

We ought to be dead certain about a few things when the boys come home. Some preachers are dead (in earnest), and others are dead-in-earnest. It makes all the difference where you put the pause. We must not meet the returning soldiers with an "if." They don't want to hear our doubts. They have been up against stern realities over there—such real things as pain and death and immortality. They won't want a religion with strings tied to it when they come back. They will want to hear a man who has the courage born of conviction. They will demand what they call the "real thing." Dr. Halsey, of the Presbyterian Foreign Board, tells of an inci-

dent of the war in which groups of mutinous soldiers seized women and girls and bore them off to their villages to lives worse than slavery. In one case after a number of women had been seized, the Captain cried out: "Are any of you Christians? If so, stand out and we will shoot you, that we may have no trouble with the missionary." One brave young girl stood out from the line and said, "I am a Christian." "Go back," said her captor, "you are the real thing." And she was. Our soldier boys have risked their lives and jeopardized themselves unto death for America. They will expect a ministry which will risk itself to the death for Jesus Christ. If we are not prepared to adventure all for Him, we had better get out of the job.

My point is that we ought to be definitely certain about a few essential things, and minimize the rest. We must have a creed, but let it be as simple as possible. One of the fallacies which the war has exploded is the old axiom that "It makes no difference what a man believes; only his actions count." The war has shown that it makes all the difference in the world what a man believes, for a real man will act out what he thinks in. Creed and conduct are closely related. The New York Peace Society some-time ago published "*The Creed of the Huns*" in words quoted entirely from the Germans themselves, even the title. Germany had a creed. She had certain convictions which she cherished all through the years. And the most flagrant acts of the war were the cold working out of creed into conduct, of belief into action. If the Huns were willing to die for their

convictions, ought not the ministry to be willing to live for theirs?

I love to hear men preach who seem to be standing on the solid rock of a few great truths. It is much more inspiring to hear a man say "I know whom I have believed," than to hear him say, "I have a suspicion that critical investigation will yet authenticate the historicity of Jesus Christ." It is surely more heartening to hear a sermon on the text, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church," than to listen to a discourse on "Will there be any Churches ten years from now?" I love to see a man standing four-square to all the winds that blow, even if I cannot stand by his side. I can well appreciate the attitude of Hume, the great skeptic, with regard to Whitfield. Hume, on his way to hear Whitfield preach, was stopped by a friend on the street. Learning where Hume was going, the friend naturally expressed great surprise, and exclaimed: "Why do you go to hear him? You do not believe what he preaches." The answer of the skeptic was significant: "No, but he does, and that is the reason I like to hear him." So I suggest, my brethren, that we have an intellectual house-cleaning, and that we take stock of ourselves and our beliefs, so that we can meet the years of Reconstruction unafraid and say: "Here are the things that have come through the fire. They still hold. You have read them by the watch-fires of the camps in the glare of the war light, and I have read them in the headlines of the extras and in the good old Book. Come, let us get back to where we believe something, and where we

believe it terribly—terribly enough to live for it, terribly enough to die for it if need be.”

III. A Ministry of Coöperation.

Two churches in the city of Chicago united to form one congregation about the same time that the military authorities decided to brigade our American soldiers alongside the English and French soldiers of more experience. The subject of the opening sermon in the new combined church was, “Brigaded Together.” Wisely did the minister apply the philosophy of the trenches to the life of the churches.

Brethren, the moral is clear. One of the biggest by-products of the war is to be along the line of ecclesiastical coöperation. Witness one or two incidents by way of illustration. When the new colours of the 304th Field Artillery were dedicated at Camp Upton, they were blessed by a Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church, a Vicar General of the Roman Catholic Church, and a Rabbi of the Jewish Church. The *New York Evening Mail* was moved to comment upon this singular event, which it called “the outward symbol of an important fact in our new religious life.” Or, take the situation disclosed in the first Training School for Chaplains at Fortress Monroe, where seventy preachers lived together in peace and harmony for five weeks without breaking one another’s heads or hearts with ecclesiastical debates. There were nineteen Methodists, thirteen Baptists, twelve Roman Catholics, eight Presbyterians, four Congregationalists, four Episcopalians, and on through the list of practically all the denominations,

even to the Salvation Army. One Presbyterian minister slept for the five weeks with an Irish Catholic on one side of him and a Methodist on the other, and yet did not engage in a single discussion of apostolic succession or the freedom of the will. The same attitude was still further emphasized at the Front. A Baptist minister played the organ at midnight mass for a Roman Catholic priest, and loaned his room for the hearing of confessions. A young man who returned to this country from driving an ambulance said that the man who brought his mail every morning had been a chauffeur in New York, while the man next to him was a professor in the University of Chicago. On the other side his neighbours were a Russian count who had been living in America, and a bright lad from a New England high school. Such instances as these could of course be multiplied indefinitely. They remind us of those days of ancient Rome of which the poet wrote:

“ Then none was for a party;
Then all were for the State;
Then the great man helped the poor,
And the poor man loved the great.”

Will the men who have returned from scenes like these wax enthusiastic over the “ Five Points of Calvinism,” or the “ Thirty-nine Articles ”? I trow not. They will not be interested in our divisions, but in our relations. They have seen in the Y. M. C. A. a picture of the Christian Church lifted above its petty divisions and ministering in Christ’s name. When the hour of stress came, here stood the denominations, riven asunder, pitifully looking at one another

and wondering what to do. The Government could not recognize any one at the expense of the others, but the Y was ready in the name of an undenominational Christ to step in and do the job; and so the Churches said: "Go ahead and represent us, and we will all unite to give you the necessary money to do the work." And the Y. M. C. A. will never hereafter have to beg for money for any enterprise, for it has laid the world everlastingly under obligation to it for its willing service. Would God the Churches had been organized to place themselves on the map of the world's workers!

But it is never too late to mend. Now is the time for the new viewpoint. Away out in China ten denominations have coalesced into one, because these Chinese brethren were challenged to the act by the immensity of their task and the demand for Christian efficiency. He was wise who said that if church unity ever came, it would move from the circumference to the center. That is precisely what it is doing. First the missionaries were its heralds, and then the trenches were. From these two points on the far-flung circumference, the idea is driving home. God grant that the Hindenberg line of denominationalism may fall before the Allied advance of Christ's brother men who are trying to answer His prayer that we all may be one, that the world may believe that God sent Him! It is related that out in India they were considering the preparation of a catechism to be used by the missionaries. One Indian Episcopal Bishop is said to have suggested a union catechism which would have in the body of the book the points on which they

all agreed, and in the appendix the points of difference. One delegate wisely remonstrated that he would accept that suggestion, provided that before the catechism was printed an operation for appendicitis should be performed on it, and the appendix cut out and the body allowed to remain. The world war was an awful surgeon, but it cut out many theological and ecclesiastical appendices. Let us hope the patient may speedily recover, and be stronger and better than ever.

IV. A Ministry of Moral Leadership.

I crave for the ministry the distinction of being the leaders of thought and achievement in every great moral issue which presents itself to the minds of the American people. Scientists are naturally looked to by the people to decide some debated scientific question. Economists are supposed to be supreme in the realm of Economics, and so on throughout the realm of human interest. But the ministry are reputed to be the guardians of the public morals, and thus the moral leaders of the community. The State ought to be given to understand that, while the Church does not propose to dabble in politics, yet we are on the lookout for the moral bearing of every great issue, and we will not be laughed out of court in the future, nor be bribed into silence, nor be damned into insignificance.

The call is for pioneers, moral captains, who will lead on in advance of the troops. Frederick Edwin Smith, Attorney-General of Great Britain, after pointing out some difficulties in the path of the

League of Nations idea, has said: "It is worth while trying for an ideal. It is better to hitch your wagon to a star than to a machine gun." That is the issue. Somebody must go ahead and be laughed at. Who better than the ministers? If they say we are trying to light the way to Utopia, tell them in the words of a modern statesman: "Well, you know what war is; it is hell; and Utopia is preferable to hell." If you shrink from the lonely task of leadership, my brother, remember that you are the lineal descendant of the Old Testament prophet, and that the prophet has been described as the man who wields a sword in one hand and holds a door open with the other, fighting off the enemy until a few followers have passed into the opening beyond the door. Remember that you are called to be a saint, and that the saint is the man who is cannonaded this side of death, and canonized the other side of it. Hence, don't be surprised at the shells.

But what a challenge it is, men! The old ecclesiast described himself in this way: "I, the preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem;" and the Anglo-Saxon word king is connected with the root *können*. He is the man who can. Can we? That is the question. Can we lead, or must we follow? Can we originate, or must we imitate? Who of us was brave enough to preach on the League of Nations until it became popular? As Dr. Faunce says: "Fifty years ago men whispered it in peace conferences, and were ignored as harmless visionaries. Twenty years ago diplomats and statesmen began to look into the matter with languid interest. Now we are swept toward

some such organization by irresistible tides." Yes, it is coming now, but were we bold enough to preach it when it was not popular? There are many other great questions to-day and somebody has got to be bold enough to dare stand in his pulpit and speak his mind, even if the Church is full of Jennie Goddesses armed with camp stools ready to throw at him. Are we afraid of camp stools and cabbages and criticism? If so, better quietly walk out the back door and go to selling life insurance. It is better to be a success as a camp follower than to be a failure as a captain. Captains of thought are needed, Generals of public opinion, Marshals of the International Mind. These are to be the saviours of society—but saviours are usually crucified.

The war has shown that humanity is willing to be led to heights of great enthusiasm and splendid sacrifice when some big program is flung at it, great enough to demand its attention. Men have bought bonds who never have thought of investing their money at four per cent. Women have given days and nights to knitting sweaters and making Red Cross bandages who were never known to think of anything beyond the card-table before. Business men not identified with any church have poured checks into the coffers of the Y. M. C. A. and kindred organizations. Yes, and splendid millions of men, with their hearts set on great careers, with everything to live for, have found something bigger still to die for. Oh, no! Humanity is not totally depraved. There are still in the human race some hints of that splendid stuff that the poet had in mind when he wrote:

"So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man,
When Duty whispers, 'Lo, thou must,'
The youth replies, 'I can.'"

Our problem, brethren, is to generate the same enthusiasm for the Kingdom of God, with all it implies, that the patriotic spell-binder temporarily generates in the hearts of his audience—an enthusiasm which shall give our returning heroes the moral equivalent of war, and shall convince them that the Church as well as the State is worth living for, and if need be, worth dying for.

I know that many will tell us that this pioneering is no business of ours. They will tell us to stick to our last, and to "preach the old Gospel," by which they mean a refrigerating gospel rather than an invigorating gospel. But that is because they do not see the vision we see. We can only "follow the gleam," and resolve to be "obedient to the heavenly vision." If we do, we shall capture the leaders of the coming years. If we do not, they will outdistance us, and we shall find ourselves in the rear rather than in the van of public opinion. God grant that Robert Louis Stevenson's words may never be written either of us, or of any of our returned and relapsed heroes:

"The frozen peaks he once explored,
But now he's dead, and by the board;
How better far at home to have stayed,
Attended by the parlour maid!"

V. A Ministry of Illumination.

A clergyman who was leaving for Camp Kearny for a series of addresses to the men advised with a

brother minister who had been there as to the nature of the subjects he ought to discuss. The reply in substance was: "Tell the boys what we are fighting for and against. They are very vague about it all." Since that time this idea of illumination and education has found systematic expression. On a larger scale, my brothers, this must be done by the pulpits now. Many things are clearer in the retrospect than in the prospect. The afterglow lights up the dim places; "When they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita." This mother who loaned her boy to the Government, and whose loan turned into a gift, will want to be mighty sure why he did not come back, and just what he died for. These taxes that will have to be paid for many long years yet may be paid with a smile instead of a frown, if we can let a little sunshine in on them. These pages of history that are to be studied with such eagerness by the next generation may well have a few moral foot-notes or running comments by ourselves, for the pulpit as well as the professor has a right to discuss a Christlike war. "Because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge," was written by the ancient ecclesiast, and it ought to be written also of his modern successors. For example, just to illustrate this ministry of illumination, it will be easy for some critic of the Church to make capital out of the fact that the Church failed to prevent the war in some diatribe of the after years. It will be in order for the preacher to be able to reply to this critic that the Church was not the only institution which failed in the crucial hour. The Church is sim-

ply one of the brothers of humiliation, all of whom have failed. Here is Science, for example. Why, instead of keeping off the war, she bent all of her energies to make it the more deadly. The Church, at least, did not do that. Here is Diplomacy. We thought she had advanced so far that her Hague Tribunals would never again permit war. But she had not. Here is Socialism. She had heralded far and wide the warning that French Socialists and German Socialists would never kill each other. But they did. We don't throw Science and Diplomacy and Socialism to the wind because they failed. No, we still believe in Democracy in spite of the Russian excesses, and we still believe in the Church in spite of Protestant and other divisions.

It is necessary for somebody to take large views of the situation. Men have come back from the trenches who have seen the war from their little sector, but know nothing of Marshal Foch's larger vision. Their vision will need correction for fear of moral astigmatism. Interpreters of Scripture are arising on all sides with prophecies of the end, and every event is fitted into its appropriate cubby-hole. Advocates of municipal ownership have their arguments, and private capital has its say. Somebody must stand far enough off from the noise of the many cannon to hear the whispers of God. Somebody must go to Headquarters and get the message which is to be passed on to the people busy down in the trenches of Readjustment. Who shall get it and pass it on if not we?

These are only a few of the characteristics of the ministry needed to-day. What shall we do as we

face them? "Who is sufficient for these things, O Lord?" "Who are we, O Lord, that thou hast brought us hitherto?" Brothers of mine, we are not sufficient, but He is. Do you remember that experience of Moses when he lost the chance of his life to become a great orator? God told him what he would have to do, and it scared him. "O Lord," he said, "I can't do this. Why, I am a very poor public speaker." And God said, "You go ahead, Moses, and make a try at it, and I will be with your mouth." But he persisted in refusing, until God finally said: "Very well, then; I will send Aaron your brother along; I know that he can speak." And Aaron made Moses so much trouble (as assistant pastors often do) that I think he wished many times he had followed God's plan instead. Let us profit by this example. My consoling belief is that God never confronts a man with a task without stretching his man to the dimensions of the task. He never brings a man into a hard place, and then runs away and leaves him there. So we may confidently step out into the taxing demands of the New Day ahead, well assured that He who called us into the ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is able to complete that which He has begun, to the end that we may finish our course with joy, and the ministry we have received of the Lord Jesus.

V

A NEW DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE

"For we are members one of another."—EPHESIANS 4:25.

IT is related that when a certain artist was decorating a church, Michael Angelo entered and glanced around. He saw that all the figures were too small. Thereupon seizing a piece of chalk, he stepped up to the wall and drew a head in proper proportion. Then he wrote the word *Amplior*, which means larger. This is the word I am trying to write to-day into the hearts of our people as we draw near the time of our annual patriotic celebration. On July 4, 1776, the Thirteen Colonies declared their independence, but at the same time, without knowing it, they declared their interdependence; for at the very time they declared their independence of the Mother Country they also declared their interdependence on one another. Franklin put in the truth very well in the unforgettable words, "We must all hang together, or else we shall hang separately."

Now it seems to me, my friends, that this larger, longer, broader word is the word for the hour to-day. We were a young country, an infant among the nations, when we set up in business for ourselves. Now, it is always characteristic of infants that they are independent. They think they own the earth, and

it is only by having their hands slapped repeatedly that they begin to discover that others have rights. So for a long time our young country took a position of isolated dignity. We were told to "avoid entangling alliances." We kept to our side of the street. When the patrol wagon ran down the streets of Europe to arrest the naughty boys who had been fighting, our good mother called us in and pulled down the blinds, so they could not arrest us for complicity in the fray. But after a while the fight was carried into our block. Some of our own neighbours were hurt, and we felt we could not stay up in our roof-garden any longer gazing at the mountains and the stars. And so down from the roof-garden and out through the sun-parlour we marched into the street; and there we mixed up in the fray, for our neighbours were calling for help, and we discovered that we were members one of another; citizens of the world. Once having taken part in the fight, we cannot go indoors again. We are out here on the street to stay, because sympathy and altruism and helpfulness are part of our national make-up.

You may have heard the story of the ship captain who stood on deck one night, gazing out into a raging sea. Peering out over the foaming billows, he saw in the distance signals of distress. He called to his men to man the boat and launch out into the deep. Some of the men came back discouraged from the first attempt, and said to him, "Captain, we will never come back;" whereupon the old hero's eyes flashed as he said: "We don't have to come back. Launch out and away." So, my hearers, as you look at the stars

on yonder Service Flag, pray if it be God's will that our brave, splendid boys may come back; but remember that they don't have to come back, for they have gone to their brother's aid, and "we are members one of another."

Will you stop with me for a moment and think your way through this thing? You will then discover this fact of interdependence staring at you from every nook and corner. Run through a single day of your busy life, for example. You get up in the morning and telephone your office. Yes, but you are dependent on "Central" for your connections. Declare your independence of the telephone company, and see where you will land. Then you come down-stairs for your morning paper lying on the porch. Yes, but you are dependent on the fidelity of the delivery boy. If he has shirked, it won't be there. Then you go into the breakfast-room for your morning meal, and what a chain of coöperating agencies has been at work to prepare for you that simple meal! You have coffee from Java, and wheat from Kansas, and syrup from the corn-fields of Louisiana, and fruit from Florida perhaps. Why, look at the people it took to mine the silver for your teaspoon, and polish it, and get it ready for your use. A small sized army probably has been at work on your table-linen, to get it ready for you from the time the flax was sown until the moment the maid spread the linen table-cloth on your table. Look at what a congregation of people it took to get you your breakfast. Why, you can't get through one day in modern life without the co-operation of hundreds or thousands. Don't you see

clearly that we are members one of another; and that the only man these days who can issue a declaration of independence is the savage who kills and cooks his own food, and makes his own bed, and is his own chauffeur and telephone operator?

Emerson long ago saw the coming of this fraternal day. He said that the merchants ought to bring their dollars, and the farmers their corn, and the poets their song, and the women their sewing, and the labourers their willing hands, and the children their flowers. The world to-day is doing that very thing in cosmic proportions. A woman in France discovers radium, and instantly the whole civilized world is ablaze with excitement, and scientists thousands of miles from France have to revise their text-books. A man in India discovers that plants are sensitive through and through, and at once a California florist who never saw India begins to experiment. A missionary goes down into Africa and carries the Gospel of the Cross, and at once the price of rubber rises in all the markets of the world. A petty Balkan quarrel makes one man kill another in a little town the world had never heard of, and the result is a universal war. The price of my sandwich on Main Street, Los Angeles, is raised because a man named William Hohenzollern in Berlin was mad with ambition. I wish the Kaiser would keep his hands off my sandwich, but he won't, because he and I happen to live on the same planet; and, strange as it may seem, he and I are members one of another. I am not especially proud of some of the members of my family, but my text holds true just the same. I want,

therefore, to point out for our consideration three great spheres of existence in which the truth of the text appears.

I. There is the Fact of Interdependence in Human Life.

Who was the first heretic of history? Cain. He was the first man ever tried for heresy, and he was judged and condemned by God Almighty. What was his heresy? Was it some doubt with reference to the character of God, or the creation of the world? Or the partaking of the forbidden fruit? No, it was none of these things. What was it? You have the heresy written out in Genesis 4:9: "Am I my brother's keeper?" The first heresy was the denial of brotherhood. It was an anarchistic declaration of independence. It was cold-blooded selfishness. That was the first heresy. It did not relate to God, but to man. The individualist was the first slacker. Cain was the first alien enemy on record. He had but one personal pronoun in his vocabulary, and that was the first person, singular number—I. He was an I-specialist of the first rank.

But Cain was not the only heretic. Ay, there have been many others. Another example not so well known was Jabez. Read his prayer as you find it in the fourth chapter of 1 Chronicles. Here in giving us a mere list of names the chronicler pauses to pay his tribute of respect to this righteous man Jabez, and he was an honourable man in many respects. But if you read his prayer you will find that he mentions himself five times in thirty-three words. The

mistake of Jabez was in forgetting to pray for others. He seems to have forgotten that prayer was to be used as a party-line, a number of voices all thrown into one great Central at the Throne of Grace. He insisted on individual service.

Well, Jonah made the same mistake; and I pick out just these three for purposes of illustration. Jonah forgot that he was related to the Ninevites, just as the German Kaiser forgot that he and his people were related to the rest of the world, and that therefore the hurt of one injures all the rest. We are members of one another, and if you hurt one member of an organism all the rest of the organism feels it. That is what Cain, and Jabez, and Jonah, and William Hohenzollern temporarily forgot. But they all learned it later. Stevenson said years ago that we were all "little islands calling out to each other across seas of misunderstanding." Perhaps we used to be, but now we are great cities connected by trunk lines; and if you have a wreck on one part of a trunk line, all the other towns on the same line suffer; for if the train is late at one place, it is late at all the others. If you have a break in the telephone or telegraph wire at one point, the whole line is useless until the break is repaired. We are members of one another, and the sorrow of one is the sorrow of all, and the joy of one is the joy of all.

It is a strange and sad fact, my hearers, that the captains of industry seem to have sensed this fact of fraternity and coöperation long before the Church or the State. For example, the chairman of the United States Steel Corporation announced last year what

might be called the Gospel of Trade, when he said that he would advocate coöperation among all the countries of the world. Now, if coöperation is good for nations, it is equally good for individuals. About a century and a quarter ago in Boston, a well-known statesman, and an equally well-known Doctor of Divinity were seriously discussing the condition of the colonies, each of which was trying to set itself up in selfish independence of the others. The result was a feeble civic life in all of them; and the preacher at last broke out in a sort of desperation and said: "Well, I will tell you. We must federate." He did not mean that they must at once declare themselves as the United States of America, but that they must begin to live as though they were members of one another—relatives, in other words. That sounds like a very commonplace suggestion these days, but it was revolutionary then. The Thirteen Colonies did federate, and the result is the greatest Union in the world to-day.

Well, we are trying to do the same thing in the Church. One of the most thrilling hours of a recent General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church was when the fraternal delegates from the Disciples Church appeared before the Assembly and suggested that we, in Christ's name, ought to be one. Dr. Washington Gladden, who had advocated unity so long, sent a special message to the Assembly in which he said that he was glad to have lived long enough to see the happenings that took place that day. I believe Jesus wants to get the scattered members of His great family together, for He said in His High-

Priestly prayer, "That they all may be one, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

It seems to me that coöperation is good business sense also. I stood the other day at the bedside of one of the officers of my church. He had been hit by an automobile, and his limb gave him excruciating pain. He sent for his family physician, who is an allopath, and he gave him medicine. My friend said that an osteopath was coming the next day to see what he could do; and I made the remark: "Won't it be a great day for medicine when the different kinds of paths—the allopaths, and the homeopaths, and the osteopaths, and the cheiropaths, and all the others—recognize and admit that there is much truth in all of their schools, that none has a monopoly of learning, and that instead of being enemies they are really members one of another, brothers in the great task of healing the open sores of the world's suffering and need!" Then when that day comes will be fulfilled the vision of Isaiah, who foretold the time when every one should help his neighbour, and every one should say to his brother, "Be of good courage," for the carpenter should encourage the goldsmith, and the smoothen of iron encourage the smiter of the anvil, saying, "It is ready for soldering." That is the Christian interpretation we need in all lines to-day.

It seems so hard to get people to believe this. A practical experiment was made some time ago by Mr. Roger Babson, of the Babson Statistical Laboratory. He said they tried to put into operation some plans which assumed that the people of the community un-

derstood that the welfare of each is dependent on the welfare of all, but he found that less than five per cent. of the people believed any such proposition. Then he decided that he must go further back and begin to train the minds of the young in the public schools, and teach the children coöperation. But there again he met with failure, because, as he says, "the schools are operated as a machine with religion barred out." So he found it almost impossible to get men to accept this principle until they came to accept it, as we do to-day, first of all as a great religious fact. Oh, when men come to believe that they are members of one another, and children of the same Father in Heaven, then they will work out this principle of fraternity in every sphere of human life.

You remember how beautifully Whittier enforced this lesson in his poem, "The Two Rabbis." The story is very simple, but the lesson is worth while. The Rabbi Nathan, who had lived a blameless life for twoscore years and ten, fell into sin. Thereupon he left his seat among the elders, and decided to go and confess his wrong to Rabbi Ben Isaac. As he made his way to Ecbatana, he found his brother Rabbi kneeling in the shadow of a holy tomb. The two men clasped each other to their hearts, and then when Rabbi Nathan said, "Pity me, O Ben Isaac, I have sinned," the second Rabbi stood awestruck himself, for he confessed his own guilt, and he too asked for the prayers of his brother Rabbi. And there, side by side, they knelt in the low sunshine by the turban stone, and each man forgot his own agony in praying for his brother.

"And when at last they rose up and embraced,
Each saw God's pardon in his brother's face.
Heaven's gate is shut to him who comes alone;
Save thou a soul, and it shall save thy own."

*II. This Great Fact of Interdependence Applies
Also in National Life.*

The Bible is an international Book. You get a beautiful picture of international coöperation away back in 1 Kings, when the description of Solomon's Temple is given. There is a significance there for us to-day, for the fact simply is that the Temple could not have been built except for the friendly relations existing between the kings and people of Israel and Tyre. The Hebrews were farmers, and the Tyrians were mechanics and seafarers. So the kindly relations between the two nations made it possible for Hiram's people to bring down their magnificent trees to Palestine for the Temple; and then in turn, the people of Tyre were able to live on their rock-bound hills, because they received the surplus farm products from the Hebrews. Mutual necessity brought the two nations together in mutual service.

It is well for us of the Church to insist in these days when Internationalism is being so much discussed, that one of the prime factors in the growth of Internationalism has been Religion. Let us see how this came about. In primitive times there were many gods. Each people of course believed its own god to be the true one. These various gods were supposed to be jealous of one another, and to incite their followers to hate other gods and their followers. Under these conditions there was almost constant

warfare among the believers in different deities. Now when polytheism passed into monotheism, brotherhood was enlarged, for each group of people looked upon believers in their own god as brothers, for they regarded themselves as the offspring of their deity. This meant that all believers in the same God were protected by the whole tribe or clan. Therefore, when other people came to believe in their God, they became their brothers. Hence, when the monotheism of the Jews passed over into Christianity, the bounds of religion were extended to include all nations, and the command was to go and baptize all people. Therefore, you see that the Early Church was the world's first great international institution, and Foreign Missions becomes simply the inevitable result of sound logic, a piece of world statesmanship. For if God is one, and all people are children of God, then all men are brothers, and then of course there is no limit to my human interests, because my world is bounded, as somebody has said, on the north by the Aurora Borealis, and on the south by the Frozen Pole, on the east by the Rising Sun, and on the west by the Day of Judgment.

Next to religion another factor ought to be mentioned, and that is the extension of blood kinship. In early days friendship was limited to people of the same kin. This meant first that the family would love each other, because the same blood was in all their veins. Gradually the family developed into the clan, and the clan into the tribe; so that when a foreigner was made a member of a given tribe, the ceremony of transfusion of blood was gone through with

to show that he was henceforth literally of the same blood as his fellows. Here is where the Old Testament finds the ancient Jews. They were just a collection of tribes when they first appeared in the Bible, and so you hear about the Ten Tribes and the Twelve Tribes. In process of time, kings were given to the people, for the purpose of welding the scattered tribes into a nation. Now, if you will open your modern history, and lay it beside your ancient history, you will see that precisely the same historical development has taken place in Germany, and Italy, and France, and England, and Spain, that took place in Israel. They have been unified into nations by development from early tribes. Up to this point the principle of my text has been accepted in the world. We are members one of another—we Italians, we French, and we Germans, because the same blood flows in our veins. There the progress has stopped, however; and for years the nations have been walling themselves in, and building up their armies and their navies.

There have been prophets of a better day, however, appearing at various times all through the years. Dante with his "Monarchia," Henry of Navarre with his "Great Design," William Penn with his plan for the United States of Europe, Immanuel Kant with his idea of "Eternal Peace,"—all these men have argued for a state of nations, a federation of the world. Goethe in his day insisted that Science and Art belonged to all the world, and before them the boundaries of nationality must disappear. Socialism has maintained the same thing; and it is very interesting

to observe that at the Socialist Conference at Amsterdam in 1904, at the very time when Russia and Japan were at war, there was one delegate from each of these warring nations, and these two delegates sat side by side, referring to each other always in courteous and friendly terms. But it is not only Socialists, and artists, and scientists, that have the international viewpoint; but preëminently, Christians must have it. We must give our food, our inventions, our literature, our scientific discoveries, but most of all, our Christ,—to the world. We have no right to feast on Christ, and let the other nations starve for lack of Him. And so I found on a recent Sunday evening, when we were preparing for a service of international friendship, that the only appropriate hymns in our books were missionary hymns. Foreign Missions is the great international business of the Church, and Foreign Missions will never again need to be defended. In the days when we as a nation avoided entangling political alliances, I can see how the religious separatist would have had good ground for his argument that we must avoid entangling religious alliances. But now his argument is gone, for we are not merely the United States of America, we are part of the United States of the World. So the world must speak a new language henceforth, the universal language of love; and must have a new standard of ethics and morality, the standard of Jesus Christ.

Here, then, is the uniqueness of our situation today. Jesus Christ stands out on the highway of the world's hatred, towering above the walls which na-

tions have built around themselves, saying: "Carry the principle of coöperation on to its logical conclusion. Let the same interdependence which enlarged you from a tribe into a nation enlarge you from a nation into a world brotherhood. You say you believe in one blood. Very well. My Father hath made of one blood all nations of the world. The same blood flows behind your fence that flows behind the fence across the way. The only trouble is, you insist on having a margin of indifference, a highway of hate separating you, a kind of No Man's Land running between you, and you won't let the blood cross. What you need is *transfusion* of blood, and not *loss* of blood. Take hold of one of my hands, each of you, and let me be the peacemaker between you, for only by way of the Cross will you become one."

Do you know that when Jesus came the first time, two thousand years ago, the whole civilized world was under one political rule, and that this was the first and only time in the world's history that it has been so? The nations were knit together in the bonds of commercial interdependence, and it was the only time when preachers of the Gospel found trade routes ready to their service, and the only time in history that one could journey from Ireland to the Euphrates, and from the Baltic Sea to the Desert of Sahara, without encountering a single custom-house. The internationalism of the world came at the same time as the great international Man, Christ Jesus. That is a very suggestive fact. But that was the internationalism of one great dominating power. What

we want to-day is the internationalism not of Imperialism, but of Democracy. Tennyson was the prophet of this new and greater internationalism, when he sang:

"When the schemes and all the systems,
Kingdoms and republics fall;
Something kindlier, higher, holier,
All for each, and each for all.

"All the full-brain, half brain races,
Led by Justice, Love, and Truth;
All the millions one at length,
With all the visions of my youth.

"Earth at last a warless world,
A single race, a single tongue.
I have seen her far away,
For is not Earth as yet so young?

"Every tiger madness muzzled,
Every serpent passion killed;
Every grim ravine a garden,
Every blazing desert tilled.

"Forward, let the stormy moment,
Fly and mingle with the past;
I that loathed have come to love him;
Love will conquer at the last."

*III. This Same Great Fact of Interdependence
Applies Also in the Spiritual Life.*

One Sunday Sir George Adam Smith sat talking with me in my study before going down to preach at the morning service. We fell to discussing some of his past experiences. He referred to some pulpits in which he had been denied a hearing because, forsooth, he was not a rabid advocate of a certain theory of the

Second Coming of Christ; and finally he said: "What is the use of always talking about His coming in the future, when He is here in my heart to-day?" Then he told me of a man who wrote him a letter, one of these men who, in Dr. Francis' happy phrase, "uses the Bible as a Santa Fé time-table," and can tell you just when Jesus is going to come, and just where His train is going to stop; and this man signed himself, "Yours in the coming of our Lord." Sir George said that he replied to the letter, and signed himself, "Yours in the power of the indwelling Christ." I think the reply was a very good one.

The incident emphasizes what I am trying to say in these closing words. Paul, in this fourth chapter of Ephesians, from which my text is taken, uses the figure of the body. He compares the Church to the body of Christ, representing it as a great organism—not a clumsy piling together of parts as in a scrap-pile or a junk-heap, but as an organism, unified and dominated by one common life. You can go over the battle-fields of Europe and pick up countless dissevered limbs and arms and bodies and feet, and lay them mechanically in the proper relative position; but out of them all you will not be able to manufacture one man, for they are not members one of another; they are members of different bodies; there is no common life current flowing through them. So Paul holds that the Church is not a fortuitous concourse of theological atoms, but a building, with all its parts perfectly fitted into one beautiful and complete structure.

Jesus uses another, and an even more beautiful figure than Paul. If Paul compares the Church to a

building, Jesus compares it to a vine. If Paul says we are members one of another, Jesus says we are actually members of Him. On that never-to-be-forgotten night, when Jesus held His last long conversation with the disciples, He may have had the idea suggested to Him by a fragment of a vine which made its way through the open window. Others believe that Jesus, on His way to the garden, went to take a farewell glance at the Temple, and that He directed the attention of His disciples to its golden vine. However the thought came, the figure is exquisitely beautiful. We are branches of the vine, and only as we abide in Him do we bring forth fruit.

Do you remember how the Gospel of John traces the three steps of progressive intimacy between Jesus and His disciples? In the thirteenth chapter He calls them servants. Now you know a servant lives in the house with you, but is not a member of the family. Then in the fifteenth chapter He calls them friends. Now a friend may be entertained in your home, but he does not abide there. But in the twentieth chapter of John, after the Resurrection, Jesus calls His disciples brethren. Now, a brother is a member of your family. The same blood is in his veins and yours. He probably abides in your home. So Jesus offers to be your brother and mine. In the light of this figure, do you wish to declare your independence of Jesus Christ, or your interdependence on Him? Is it not time that we Christians made a new declaration, especially in this hour, of our absolute and utter dependence on Him? Just rest on Him the burden and meantime abide in His love. When my little son

climbs up into my machine, and I drive down through the devious adventures of city traffic, he simply leaves to me the direction of the car. He does not worry at all, because he abides in my love, and trusts me to see him through. He is a member of my family, a member of me, and he knows I would sooner die than betray the trust he reposes in me. If I am thus faithful to the little soul which abides in me, do you not think Christ will be faithful to those who put their trust in Him?

The other night at the Midnight Mission, some of us went down to say a few words on the occasion of their anniversary. After the addresses, when the invitation was given, several men came forward and knelt at the altar-rail. I went up and talked with one man, and asked him if he were a Christian, and he said, "Yes," he had been one for several months. I then asked him if he had openly confessed Christ by connecting himself with some church, and he said "No." I told him I thought he would find it easier to continue in the Christian life if he took that open stand. "Oh," he said, "a fellow can hold out all right if he tries." Then I assured him that he could not hold out in his own strength; and some words came to my mind, and I close my sermon this morning with the same words which I quoted to the poor penitent at the Mission:

"My brother, you fear that you cannot hold out;
Trust self, and your hope is gone:
The motto of Christ for those who doubt
Is not 'Hold out' but 'Hold on.'"

VI

CORN AND THE NEW MOON, OR BUSINESS AND RELIGION

"When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn?"—AMOS 8:5.

MY text tells of a time when religion interfered with business. It is the protest of commercialism against mysticism. It sees no use in the suspension of traffic for holidays. It is the cry of the corn-merchants who are compelled to sit with idle hands and lose trade until the day of the new moon be over. And while the terms may sound antiquated, yet the fundamental idea behind the question is as much in evidence in the twentieth century as it was in the time of Amos: "When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn?"

The Book of Amos is a tract for the times. In fact we are beginning to discover that the Minor Prophets are alive with the discussion of problems which face us to-day. They cut so close home that many of the men in our pews do not like to hear the text announced from their pages. I remember a New York clergyman, who told me that he was fond of reading and preaching from the Major and Minor Prophets, and that some of the financiers in his flock finally remonstrated with him requesting a discontinuance of this practice—with the ultimate result that he resigned his pastorate. You can't please some

of our modern congregations better than never to mention this portion of God's word.

Now this rude herdman of Tekoa whom we know as Amos got himself into a good deal of trouble by reproving the pride and luxury of the people of his time. His denunciations offended not only the priest of Bethel who reported him to the king as a disturber of the peace, but the Wall Street men also. I fancy Amos wasn't very popular on "change." I imagine the newspapers ridiculed and mercilessly cartooned this prophet of calamity. I shouldn't wonder if the Board of Commerce passed unanimously a set of resolutions asking him to leave the city and take his religious observances and his holidays with him. But he refused to move a step and so the only recourse the merchants had was to whine—and this is a very whining text, "When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn?"

What is this new moon to which these Jewish traffickers took exception? It was one of the annual feasts instituted by Moses, on which day the people must blow trumpets over their burnt offerings and their peace offerings. And it was a far more important day than it is with us, for committees were sent out to catch the first rays of the new moon, and as soon as they sighted it, they announced the fact by fires on the Mount of Olives, and the watchers on neighbouring mountains, catching the signal, lighted in turn their fires and soon all the heights were aflame with the good news that another cycle of thirty days had begun. All labour was halted and the people were rallied anew to allegiance to Jehovah.

The point of the text, then, is that religion had touched the pocketbook, and when it gets to that point, it always hurts. The stock-brokers were perfectly satisfied for Amos to preach religion, if he wanted to, but they didn't want him to interfere with their revenue. They were impatient to get back to work. The Fourth of July never did anybody any good, anyway, and the Sunday blue laws were a nuisance. The people who wanted new moons were welcome to them, but as for themselves, they wanted to sell corn.

Now, I propose to consider this thought of Corn and the New Moon as setting forth the relation of Business and Religion. Let us discuss some of the questions suggested by the text:

I. The Pressure of Business.

You will notice that there is a great assumption underlying this text, which is either true or false. If it is true, then the plaint is entirely justified. If it is false, then it ought to be corrected. That assumption is: that the main purpose of life is to sell corn. The New-Moon holidays have to be endured as a necessary evil, but we must get back to the corn as quickly as possible. It is the thought which Mark Twain put into Adam's diary supposedly narrating his experiences in the Garden of Eden. When he comes to Sunday, time seems to hang heavy on his hands, for the record is: "Sunday—pulled through." And I suppose there are many modern Adams who just manage to pull through Sunday, and are happy only when they are back at their desks on Monday. Now, there is another possible assumption: and that

is the main business of life is the New Moon and the religion for which it stands—and that we sell corn simply between times as a means of making a living. These are the two extremes of materialism on the one hand and mysticism on the other—and between the two every one of us somewhere finds his place.

I think we shall admit, without any debate, at the outset, that modern life has too much corn and too little moon. One of our writers says that there is more care and fret in a year of New York City than in a century of Hindustan. We have long since wiped out of our business calendars many of the ancient Hebrew holidays, and we have all we can do to keep those required by law still remaining. In fact we Americans have invented so many new nervous diseases that we have had to invent a new religion, Christian Science, to cure them. There are too many exhausts and too few exhilarators in our modern machinery. To borrow the automobilist's figure: we Americans travel in high speed too much.

Only glance at our life and its high pressure: Our forefathers had to quit work at sunset—but we have lighted our offices with the electric light and can have it bright as day at midnight, if we will. The Pullman sleeper makes it possible for us to travel and sleep at the same time. The wireless telegraph keeps us in touch with our office even when we are vacating on the great ocean. The Sunday excursion enables us to take an outing on God's day without taking any time off from our business—we simply take it off from the Lord. To be sure, the eight-hour day and the child labour laws and the Socialist party and the

labour organizations are doing what they can to compel more time for the New Moon, but Corn still holds the day to a great extent. Charles Stelzle, who knows the labouring men so well, says that the motto of many a working man is still "Meat, Malt and Mattress," that is to say, food, drink and a place to sleep—and not much place for New Moons in such a program as that.

One of our ministers tells of spending several months in south France with a young man who had made money at fever heat in New York, going almost wild in the craze of the market—corn, corn, corn; and then his doctor ordered him over to the salubrious climate of southern France, to spend his hard-earned dollars in the vain effort to get well again. What a common story that is: of the man who has no time for the weekly Sabbath moon of rest, or the daily evening moon of repose or the monthly new moon of an occasional holiday, and then he finds out too late that all these moons were but the kind provision of a wise creator who knew man needed the periodic rest He gave.

The San Francisco World's Fair decided to give the world a needed lesson. It is rather strange that none of our previous World's Fairs impressed our religion on the sightseer. We had all sorts of exhibits of art and education and industry—but it was all corn. San Francisco decided that the world should know that we Americans have some Moons here also—and so they planted in the midst of the great exhibition a lasting symbol of our faith and loyalty to the god of the New Moon. It is sad that

the idea should be so new—and yet I'm afraid that many foreigners are much more impressed by our business than our religion, for our sky-scrapers are much more in evidence than our churches. John Kelman wisely said, "God pity that city or country whose smoke-stacks rise higher than its church steeples."

We may well emulate the spirit of Kipling's prayer:

“For heathen heart that puts her trust
In reeking tube and iron shard—
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
And guarding, calls not Thee to guard;
For frantic boast and foolish word,
Thy mercy on Thy people, Lord. Amen.”

II. The Necessity of Fixed Seasons of Rest and Worship.

My second point follows logically upon the first. For if we grant the tendency of business to usurp the whole life, we see at once that the only defense, the only guarantee that religion will receive its fair share of time, is in the existence of fixed and definite seasons which are set apart for its observance. Therefore, before you rail at the New Moon holiday, just stop and observe that if it were left to our caprice and if we didn't have the recurring monthly day to remind us of it, we should probably slip over our holiday altogether and the first thing you knew we should be a moonless people whose one object in life was the cultivation and the sale of corn.

Just here is the answer to those critics who object to the enforcement of all Sabbath laws. They say that no outside authority, the government or any-

body else, has any right to compel them to rest one day in seven, but that this weekly rest should be left to the individual conscience. Right here is the answer: It is a great principle of pedagogy that law must do for children what they will not do for themselves—and we are all children of a larger growth. And it has been proven by experiment that man needs certain new moons ever so often for rest and worship—and the history of the world has also shown that man left to himself will become so engrossed in his struggle for a living that he will neglect those halting-places along the path of life—and so the State has to come in to the aid of the Church, in defense of the common welfare.

America is witnessing right now the contest between the Corn and the New Moon. The pessimist is the man who says the corn is going to win, and the optimist insists that the new moon is going to win. I believe the optimist is right. I recall a sentence of a recent essayist in the *Atlantic Monthly*—he exclaims, "Somehow the religion of Christ has got loose again in our world." Taking this assertion as my point of departure, I began to test its truth—and I call your attention to some of the things I discovered. Beginning right here in America, I read an editorial from the *Wall Street Journal* which said among other things: "What America needs more than railway extension and western irrigation and a low tariff and a bigger wheat crop and a merchant marine and a new navy, is a revival of piety; the kind father and mother used to have—piety that counted it good business to stop for daily family prayers before

breakfast, right in the middle of the harvest; that quit work a half-hour earlier Thursday night so as to get the chores done and go to prayer-meeting; that borrowed money to pay the preacher's salary, etc. . . . What is this thing which we are worshipping but a vain repetition of what decayed nations fell down and worshipped just before their light went out? Great wealth never made a nation substantial nor honourable. . . . It takes greater and finer heroism to dare to be poor in America than to charge an earth-works in Manchuria." What do you think of that for a Wall Street sermon? It is just an amplification of my text and says in substance this: "Don't founder on corn, as other nations have done,—Rome and Greece and the rest of them,—leaving nothing to posterity other than their broken ruins glimmering in the moonlight." Well, I discover that the same thing is echoed in the pages of the French press—and that one of the hopeful signs of the present day is a reaction toward vital religion in France. About the time that the separation of Church and State became effective in France, there broke out a series of murderous crimes, to such an extent that the city government had to provide dogs for the protection of its officers. This comment was made by an observant citizen: "What else can you expect? We have expelled a Church that was effete, but as a nation we cannot live secure without religion."

When we turn from France to India, the story is the same: The Bengal Trade Association has petitioned the government to provide some religious instruction in the government colleges. "If," they say,

"you cannot give Christian instruction, at least teach them their own faith, Hindu or Mohammedan, for no people can exist without religion." In the light of such facts as these, I hold that John Fiske is justified in his dictum that religion is "the largest and most ubiquitous fact connected with the existence of mankind upon the earth,"—as the scientist says, "an inevitable element in human life."

It is a very noteworthy fact that the philosopher Comte, the very man who had predicted the fatal extinction of the disposition to religion in the human soul, ended his career by founding a new religion clumsily copied from the Roman Catholic. Some of his disciples tried to excuse their master by saying that he had gone mad—but he hadn't at all—he had gone sane—he had discovered that the soul in its outcry for a God was not to be silenced by the empty words of philosophy any more than it is to be fed on husks of corn which the swine do eat. After all, the difference between swine and manhood is this: that swine are perfectly content to stay in the far country as long as you will fill them with corn;—but manhood staggers home bruised and bleeding to its God. Which do you prefer, husks or moonlight?

III. The Endangered New Moons of the Present Day.

Sometimes it looks as if an eclipse of the moon were darkening our land. I would remind you of some of the moons which are in danger of being eclipsed by the clouds of commercialism. There is the New Moon of Childhood, for instance. Oh, I be-

lieve increasingly in child labour laws. Any of you who studied the exhibits at our Conservation Exposition which pictured the tragedy of precious rosebuds sacrificed on the altars of American greed, will never forget the awful picture. Stand by the doors of any of our great factories at the closing hour and watch the streams of stunted and blasted and wrecked lives issuing forth from the mouth of this devouring demon of iron and steel—and you will see that while we are making corn, God knows we are paying dearly for it. And God pity the revenues which are piled up out of stolen boyhood and girlhood, to swell the bank account of some magnate who already has more corn than he knows what to do with.

Then there is the New Moon of Business Depressions. Oh, how much we heard about in such abnormal years as we have been passing through! Business men on every corner were asking, "When will the new moon be gone that we may sell corn?" If our revenues are not up to the top notch every month, we complain. Now granted that there may be a periodical shrinkage, may it not do us good? Three crops a year, so the farmers tell us, will wear out the soil. Time and again when I have asked why yonder field is lying idle, I have been told that it is not idle but is resting that it may do all the better the next year. Why, even a razor—so a California barber told me, will do better work if it is allowed to rest on Sunday. And freight crews that rest one day in seven have been proven to do much better and much more work than those who work every day and all day long of a moonless week.

Then there are the National New Moons. Many foreigners would insist on working on the Fourth of July and the twenty-second of February and the thirtieth of May unless they were withheld by the strong arm of law. For they figure it is better to add to the contents of their cash-drawer than it is to increase the diameter of their soul. Like the man afflicted with both cold and fever, who said he would stuff the cold and let the fever starve a while, so they, being afflicted with both a soul and a body, resolve to stuff the body and let the soul starve a while.

Then, too, there are the New Moons of the Religious Life. Oh, brethren, don't let them go—they are a good investment—even Wall Street says so—statesmanship says so—history says so—your experience says so. Let the people who want to worship the Corn-god go to darkest Africa or the depths of heathendom somewhere and like the other savages build themselves an idol, wood or stone or corn,—the material makes no difference. But let us tell them distinctly that as long as they live in America, they must observe the holiday of the New Moon. And let us warn all these immigrants, Jews, Europeans, Asiatics, Barbarian and Scythian, bond and free, that while they are at liberty to elect whether they shall come to America or not, once having decided to come here, they must expect to revere the institutions of the land—and if they are caught stealing any of our Moons, they will be prosecuted for criminal robbery.

Then, finally, there is also the New Moon of Personal Bereavement. The other evening I sat in a sick-room and talked with a woman who had been

sick seventeen years—and who for four years had been unable to lift her right hand to her face. I tell you, as I saw the mist of tears when we had finished our prayer of comfort, I couldn't blame this child of God if she had said: "When will the New Moon be gone that I may sell corn?" Well, blessed be God, the tedium of the New Moon is lighted by His presence, so that His child can

"Trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain,
That morn shall tearless be."

IV. The Sad Plight of a Restless Age.

What was the upshot of the controversy suggested by the text? Why, the sequel was that the corn-merchants won their contention and forgot the troublesome moon-holidays and became so adept at selling corn that the Jew the world over is known as a shrewd financier. But there is also another sequel: God kept His word—and He had fairly warned them that if they did not allow the land to enjoy its Sabbaths, He would deprive them of their land and send them into captivity—and so you have the sorry spectacle of the wandering Jew, a traveller up and down the earth, with plenty of corn but nowhere to enjoy it. Byron in his *Hebrew Melodies* puts it well:

"The wild dove hath her nest, the fox his cave,
Mankind their country, Israel but the grave."

There is something very pathetic to me in the history of the Jews. It is strange to see their stores closed on Saturday and open on Sunday—it is a kind of silent protest at the Christian civilization by which

they are surrounded—a kind of advertisement of the fact that they don't belong here. Now I raise the question: Shall a similar fate befall us? Shall America find herself carried into captivity because she has forgotten to rest and to worship the eternal God and to observe His New Moons? Be not deceived—God is not mocked, for whatsoever a nation soweth, that shall it also reap.

I know no better example to follow in this respect than that of the Man of Galilee. He lived the moonlit life. When the Sabbath came, He went as His custom was into the synagogue regularly for worship. He never had a business engagement which interfered with the church-service hour. He planned His days with reference to the Moon. This country is named after Him. It has been declared a Christian country by the highest courts in the land. If this means anything, it surely means that His example shall be our law—that His birthday and His resurrection day shall ever be held in memory among us.

I am reminded of an incident at sea. There were a good many Jews on the ship, and when the time came for the Sunday morning service, one Jew was heard to remark that he was not going to take his children in to hear the story of Christ read. That evening a famous tenor sang in the saloon. The Jew was in a front seat with his children—and behold, the very first song the tenor sang was Tennyson's great prophecy of the final triumphant reign of Christ:

“ Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.”

VII

THE TWILIGHT OF THE KINGS

"And Benhadad the king of Syria escaped on a horse with the horsemen."—I KINGS 20:20.

HISTORY, like some preachers and other folks, is fond of repeating itself. One is surprised that it has so little inventive genius, that it is so slow to discover new situations. Hence, it is a good thing in these days to read over again some of the great campaigns of the old Book, for we shall discover an amazing similarity to contemporary events. There is no new thing under the sun. Whether a man writes a poem, or gets married, or commits suicide, somebody else has done it before him. Dr. Richards, in his notable sermon on "The Monotony of Sin," represents an ancient Babylonian being taken through the seamy side of New York life, and instead of being charmed, he yawns in weariness and exclaims to his companion, "Why, we had all this in Babylon thousands of years ago." So it is that when a man starts out to do an original thing, whether it is to build a bridge or an empire, he always finds that somebody else has been to the patent office before him, and has stolen his secret and copyrighted his scheme. Emerson represents Nature as saying to an excited little individual, "Why so hot, little man?" as much as to say: "Don't lose your head and throw your transfer away. The car is still

on the track. We will run to the end of the line. The great Motorman is still in charge. The conductor hasn't gone to the insane asylum yet. Just possess your soul in peace."

I have made these general observations by way of introduction to a very interesting comparison to which I wish to call your attention this morning. As you take up the twentieth chapter of 1 Kings, and read it through verse by verse, you pause time and again to note on the margin the modern equivalent of the ancient fact. If you employ the method of the deadly parallel, you feel like shaking your finger at History and saying: "Look here, History, you have been copying. I can show you every detail in an old book I have. Next time, try to be more original. Give us something new." So I shall attempt to portray this comparison under a series of headings as we study the chapter in detail.

I. The First Thing I Notice is the Grasping Nature of Autocracy.

The more I study history, the less love I think Almighty God has for kings. As I read of Benhadad escaping on a common horse, and Napoleon carried away to Elba, and Nicolas Romanoff carried off into exile and finally shot, and William Hohenzollern shifting from auto to train and from train to auto to escape the vengeance of an outraged people,—the more I believe in the diminuendo of autocracy; for it seems to be a characteristic of all autocracy to reverse the divinely appointed currents of life, and to live for self instead of others. Let me illustrate this proposi-

tion by tracing for a moment the rise of the Hebrew state.

When the Israelites came into Canaan, they brought with them the tribal system which had prevailed in the desert. But the trouble with this system was that the tribes were hostile one to another, and there was no concerted action against the Canaanite. At the utmost, two or three tribes would combine temporarily for a common aim, and then fall apart again. Hence, you find that in the time of the Judges the conquest of the promised land was still incomplete. These Judges were thirteen humble tribesmen whom the Lord raised up from time to time to represent Him in the nation, and so they were both patriots and religious reformers. The sixth of the Judges, Gideon, was offered the throne by his army after his victory over the Midianites, but he declined the dignity, saying that God should rule over them. The thing which finally forced the Jews to unite was their conquest by the Philistines. These Philistines had a genius for organization, and with their compact federation of five cities were more than a match for the disorganized Hebrews, and utterly defeated them in the battle of Ebenezer. Then comes the Prophet Samuel to the rescue. He came forward as a leader in whom the people trusted after the fatal battle of Ebenezer, with the vision of deliverance from the Philistine yoke through the union of the jealous tribes under the rule of a king. The selection of this leader was left to Samuel, and he by divine direction chose Saul the son of Kish. The effect was magical. The leader had appeared, and all the Northern tribes ral-

lied to his standard. The Amorites were beaten, and Saul was chosen king by acclamation.

Thus began the monarchy in Israel. Now notice: While it freed the people from oppression from without, it brought the new peril of oppression from within. The new peril was the abuse of autocratic power. You see the Hebrews had been a democratic people, and the first kings were slow in exercising authority. Saul had little more power than one of the Judges. The earliest kings had to make a covenant with the elders of the tribes before they ascended the throne. Prophets could rebuke the king without fear of violence. But little by little the spirit of autocracy began to manifest itself. Saul, for example, created a standing army of picked men from all the tribes in place of the old tribal militia. Read 1 Samuel 14: 52: "When Saul saw any strong man or any valiant man, he took him unto himself." David went further, and added foreign mercenaries to this standing army. In the time of Amos, the towns had to raise a levy of soldiers in proportion to their population. The elders of the tribes gradually disappeared, and in their place there grew up a body of princes, of whom we read so frequently in the Old Testament. These princes were simply a bureaucracy of favourites appointed by the king. Thus you see that little by little the kingship of the Jews began to assume the character of an Oriental despotism.

Does not this all sound very modern? Did you ever suppose that the rise of the Hebrew state was so similar to the rise of modern states? There are five ways in which the abuse of autocracy always mani-

feats itself, and these appear in the Good Book just as they do in the Blue Book or the Yellow Book of the twentieth century. Here they are: The love of magnificence, monopolies of trade, oppressive taxation, deeds of violence, and a lust for foreign conquest. The last of these five is the point of comparison now. I suppose there never was an organization founded for defense, but was later used for offense. Samuel would have turned over in his grave if he could have seen what was to come after him. He wanted to unite the tribes to beat off the foe; but here we find that as soon as David threw off the Philistine yoke, he undertook aggressive campaigns against the Moabites, Edomites, Ammonites, and others. This is a fact that seems to go with autocracy everywhere. It is never satisfied with its place in the sun. It always wants to own its neighbour's vine and fig-tree. So we find it here in this twentieth chapter of 1 Kings.

Look at the historical situation for a moment. I remember hearing Elbert Hubbard say: "It is not true that competition is the life of trade. Coöperation is the life of trade." This is true of nations as well. Now, if Benhadad and his thirty-two allies had been as sharp as they should have been, they would have known that it was a suicidal policy to attack Israel; for Assyria was menacing them all on the north, and instead of fighting the Jews they should have formed a League of Nations, a great alliance against the Assyrian power. The prophets saw this and told the kings so, but the kings contemptuously said: "You can't expect a lot of preachers to know anything about politics. Let them go on back to their

prayer-meetings. Forward, march!" And so they went ahead on their blind scheme. Benhadad, like some other monarchs, wasn't satisfied to let well enough alone. He invaded his neighbour's territory, and thus signed the declaration of war, and hostilities began. Ahab knew he could not meet the vast army in the field, and so he shut himself up in Samaria, and the siege commenced. In precisely the same spirit, William II declared war on an unprepared world on August 1, 1914, and the siege of four and a quarter years began.

II. I Notice in the Second Place the Courage of the Coward.

I have always wondered what Dr. Aked's sermon on this theme was about. I have never read it, but I have read an illustration of that very thing in the case of Ahab. Now Ahab was a man whose wife was of the masculine gender, and he was of the feminine gender. You have to remember that in parsing Ahab: proper noun, third person, feminine gender, and very singular number. He was an odd number, because being a man myself, I decline to believe he is one of us. Mrs. Ahab was Mrs. Pankhurst and the whole woman suffrage movement rolled into one personality. Mrs. Ahab had converted her husband to unchristian science: he became a Baal-worshipper; and of course when a man turns his back on God, he doesn't have much to rely on in case of a siege or anything else. The other evening as I lay awake in the small hours of the night, all alone in the big house in which I live, I thought how little was

between me and the outside world: in one vulnerable place, nothing but two little screw-eyes through which a padlock had been passed. But a second thought came, and that was: "No, there is the padlock, plus the hand of God; there is more between me and the world than I know." It is that infinite Plus that protects God's children. But Ahab had no Plus. He had nothing but the walls of Samaria, and they were very weak.

Hear the words of the ultimatum. Up to the locked gate of the city a herald came to demand admission for the ambassadors of Benhadad. Their ultimatum was given in words of deepest insult. The Syrian demanded everything. When an Oriental king had to give to his conqueror all the women of his seraglio, even his own queen, he certainly was humbled in the dust. Belgium was summoned to do practically the same thing, but she refused to do it, and the world cheers Albert of Belgium as much as it abhors Ahab; for Ahab said: "At your service, Benhadad; all that I have is thine."

Will you notice here in passing that our false Baals never save us? Look at this pitiable woman, Jezebel. Why, her father was a priest of Astarte, and she had built a temple to Baal, and had given an endowment which supported 850 priests of Baal, and they with all their pompous ceremonies and blood-stained invocations had wholly failed to save her. And I can fancy that she and her husband had a little prayer-meeting in the palace after the ambassador of Assyria went away, and the refrain of their prayers might have been, "O Baal, hear us! O Baal, save us! De-

liver us from the terms of a humiliating peace." So the "good old German God" on whom our enemies relied was merely a Baal of their own manufacture, and they learned too late that Baal never saves.

But hark! Here comes a second *Lusitania* note. Another embassy comes from Benhadad, which posts a notice of warning saying that to-morrow (twenty-four hours' notice) the town will be given up to pillage. Here the coward king rises to the occasion with the courage of despair. He becomes suddenly very democratic in the time of reverses. We get an interesting bit of information here about the constitution of the Kingdom of Israel. It was very much like that of the little Greek states in the days of the Iliad. In prosperity the king was nearly despotic, but when things went against him he was reduced to the necessity of calling an open-air senate, composed of his elders and attended by the people as well. The king laid the desperate situation before this council, just as the pastor often lays a difficulty before his elders, for the benefit of their advice. They reinforce Ahab's backbone, stiffening it up, and send back a curt refusal of the foreigner's request. So the second scene of the drama ends.

III. The Third Thing I Notice is Pre-Christian Diplomacy.

I do not know how far back the science of Diplomacy goes. I suppose the custom of interchanging notes and messages between nations is as ancient as the human race itself. But these notes have not always meant just what they have said, and so Diplo-

macy has come to mean a roundabout, tactful way of stating a matter, which may have to be discounted before it can be exchanged into direct cash value. It ought to have been true that the coming of Jesus Christ and His teachings made an epoch in the science of Diplomacy, and Christian Diplomacy ought to stand for directness and fair dealing. It waited for the Great War, however, to bring this about. There is an outstanding example of it, nevertheless, a few years back, which anticipated the present hour. In 1899, when China was in the midst of the agonies pending the Boxer Rebellion, the nations of Europe stood looking on with eager eyes, hoping for its dismemberment, that they might each secure a slice. Our great John Hay, you remember, addressed to those eager observers his famous note of September 9, 1899, in which he stated that the United States stood for fair play in China, and called on any other nation which did not agree with this to say so, or stand committed to the same policy. The nations stood dumbfounded, and wondered what trick was behind the words. No nation had the courage to stand up and admit it was a thief, and so Hay closed the matter with another note, in which he accepted their silent acquiescence as "final and definite." They spoke of this in Europe as "shirt-sleeve diplomacy." I like the term. It sounds like directness, and the open covenants for which President Wilson pleads to-day.

Notice, then, an early illustration of "shirt-sleeve diplomacy" in these pre-Christian days of Ahab and Benhadad. There was an exchange of just two notes

—one each; and as Billy Sunday says, you did not have to lug a dictionary along to understand what the two kings meant. Benhadad's note was this: "The gods do so to me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me." In other words: "I will bring with me such an army that after your city is shattered into dust, there won't be a handful for each of my soldiers." Do you know what that reminds me of? It reminds me of a certain haughty brute who said to Mr. Gerard, "I will not stand any nonsense from America after this war." Well, we didn't ask him to stand any. These two scenes together suggest to me a certain verse of a good old Book I sometimes read; "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." And any time you want an illustration of that Scripture text, get the picture of that braggart of Berlin who would not stand any nonsense, fleeing for his life from the taunts of a cursing world.

Let us notice Ahab's reply. He simply said: "Do you remember, Benhadad, a little proverb which runs something like this? 'Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off.'" In other words, as the English has it, "Praise a fair day at night." Or, as the Latin puts it, "Don't sing the triumph song until you win the victory." Or, as the French say it, "Don't sell the bear skin before you kill the bear." Once again, as the wise old Book puts it: "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." We have the same idea in mind when we say, "Man proposes, but

God disposes." Oh, my hearers, what a world of difference there is between the man who exclaims in boastful pride, "I am going to do so and so," and the other who humbly says, "If the Lord will, my plans are such and such." The men who built the Tower of Babel left God out. The king who was going to grind Samaria to the dust left God out. The Emperor from Corsica who was going to rule the world left God out. And finally, the man who mapped the Berlin to Bagdad railway left God out. Beware of any scheme which side-tracks the Almighty and rushes ahead on its own steam to the lands beyond. There will be a head-on collision with Failure soon or late. The disaster may be a few days or four years up the track, but in any case it is there.

IV. The Fourth Point of Interest is the Intervention of the Commander-in-Chief.

One of the great leaders of the late war said, "Battles are won by moral forces." I think it was Napoleon who said, "It is the incalculable element which wins or loses a battle." So at Waterloo, there was just a little declivity in the ground which the French engineers had overlooked. So when all is said and done, when we have picked our men, and mapped our ground, and assigned each general to his place, there is still the element of "chance," some call it, but we prefer the word "God." God Almighty, my friends, is not confined to cathedrals or cloisters. Believe me, God was just as hard at work at the first and second Marne, and at Verdun and Metz, as the busiest soldiers there. But because the enemy could not see

Him, they discounted Him. A captive German soldier displayed a medal sent out from the German high command, which had certain insignia on it, and then these words: "You will not have to give an account in the Day of Judgment for anything you do in the service of your country." These blasphemous and impious authorities actually set themselves in the place of God, and presumed to grant absolution from their blood-stained hands for all wrong done for the sake of the Fatherland. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

To return to our story, God stepped into the breach. I know Ahab trembled when the 'phone rang and Central said: "There's a long-distance message for you; a prophet of the Lord wants to speak to you." Now, here is something very beautiful, my friends; let us get it: a touching glimpse into the Father heart of our forgiving God. Ahab had no reason to expect anything from a God he had discarded long since, and so I fancy he looked for a message of hate. But, instead, here at the eleventh hour, with only a few more hours of grace before the assault began, God sends this word: "Hast thou seen all this great multitude? I will deliver it into thine hand this day, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord." Ah, my friends, I believe that one of those days when "Christ's gray General," Ferdinand Foch, knelt in humble prayer in some little church in northern France, this same heartening word came to him: "Seest thou this terrible enemy? Be of good cheer. Lo, I am with you

always, and they shall not pass. They might get by you, Foch, but they shall never get by Me. They shall not pass."

I say, thank God for that nameless preacher. We do not know who the prophet was. The Rabbis always guess at a name when they can, and they say it was Micaiah. We care not. The interesting thing is, that nothing will so preserve a people's morale as confidence in a Supreme Being who watches while they sleep, and fights while they are weary, and guards them through the night. And so I believe that when the history of the recent years is written up, that among the agencies which will be counted as helping to win the victory, some little place will be given to the prophets of God, who stood at their post, and tried to keep up the courage of their people by saying: "Have faith in God. Do your best, and leave it to Him."

But God always works through means, and the very first question which leaps to Ahab's lips is, "By whom?" "You say, God is pledged to win this victory. Very well, where are the soldiers to do it? We cannot fold our hands and leave it all to Him." The answer is, even as it was in America: "By the young men." We are not told what the draft age was, but we know that the young servants of the provincial governors came to the rescue in place of the old veterans who had no faith in such a foolish venture.

V. This Brings Us to the Battle Itself.

God is a wonderful mathematician. He figures up

120 THE TWILIGHT OF THE KINGS

His assets and His liabilities, and time and again His men have gone into battle when there was not a chance in the world for them, except as He stood at the weakest place.

“He turns the arrow that else might harm,
And out of the storm He brings a calm;
And the work that seems so hard to do,
He makes it easy, for He works too.”

Look at the assets and liabilities here. Look at the Central Powers vs. the Allies. The Syrians had 130,000 men, directed by thirty-five kings, equipped with catapults and battering rams, scaling ladders and archers, such as we have seen pictures of in the sculptures of Sennacherib's time. Very well: how many did the Allies of God have? There were 232 pages, (young men who waited on the district governors) in the van, and a paltry army of 7,000 soldiers who marched out of the gate of Samaria to the desperate undertaking.

Ahab's plan of campaign was well thought out. They left the city at noon. At that burning hour, under the intolerable heat of the Syrian sun, it is almost impossible to bear the weight of armour, or to sit on horseback, or to endure the fierce heat of iron chariots. The Syrian soldiers would be taking their noonday siesta, and their chariots and war-steeds would be unprepared. Benhadad and his kings were in the midst of a drunken revel, when the lookout announced that there were some men who had come out of the city gates. They were not a respectable enough number to call it an army, and the idea of an attack by that handful seemed ridiculous. Simi-

larly, there was a time when the American boys were laughed at, but somehow that has passed. And so the drunken king's command was, "Take them alive, whether they come to fight or ask terms of peace."

Here is a sermon on Preparedness. The Syrians were not ready for an attack. The little band dashed into the midst of the drunken, sleepy crowd. One explanation of Waterloo is, that Napoleon was overcome by exhaustion and loss of sleep, and gave contrary orders without knowing it. The Syrian kings probably did that also, and one of those fearful panics was created which have often been the destruction of Eastern hosts. A United States officer told me that his experience was, German soldiers were all right so long as their commanders were with them. But when the battle lines became broken and the officers lost, the men had no initiative of their own. The same thing was true here, and those who are prone to doubt this story will only need to read a little into Oriental history to see that the Oriental loses his head in a panic, and that scores of battles have been lost for that very reason. And so the panic became a rout, and the Israelites had nothing to do but to slay, and long before evening they were masters of the field.

And now comes the text: "And Benhadad, the king of Syria, escaped on an horse with the horsemen." The king had a very narrow escape. He could not even wait for his chariot. He had to fly with a few of his cavalry, and apparently escaped on an inferior horse. This is the plight of a man who a few hours before had said he would crush Samaria

into fragments. Does it remind you of anything in recent days? Does that fleeing monarch, spurring his horse on into the dusk of that Syrian day, have any resemblance to a certain European, dashing with a handful of followers in a closed automobile out of his own city over the border, to be interned as a public nuisance in a castle, where he could await the sentence of outraged law?

President Nicholas Murray Butler told the students of Columbia University that the most significant statement he had heard the summer the war broke out in Europe, was made to him on the third day of August by a German railway servant, a veteran of the Franco-Prussian War. Dr. Butler asked him whether he would have to go to the front. The old man said: "No, I am too old. I am seventy-two. But my four sons went yesterday—God help them. And I hate to have them go; for, sir," he added in a lower voice, "this is not a people's war; it is a kings' war, and when it is over there may not be so many kings." It rather looks as though the old veteran was a pretty good prophet, does it not? Emerson's words come back to us with new meaning these days:

"God said, 'I am tired of kings,
I suffer them no more;
Up to my ears each morning brings
The outrage of the poor.'"

VI. Finally, We Come to the Question: After Victory, What?

Many people talked as though the Millennium would come as soon as the Allies won the war. Most

of us knew better than that. Every peace yet made in the world's history has had in it the seed of future wars, and if this peace is to be an exception it has got to be a new kind of peace. How suggestive is the warning which comes to the victorious king in the story before us! The same unnamed prophet who encouraged him in the darkest hour now warns him in the brightest hour. The same preacher who steadied him in defeat now steadies him in victory. He says in substance: "Now be careful, Ahab. Don't lose your head. All is not won yet. The Assyrians will surely return next year. Look well to your margin and reserves. Begin now to prepare yourself for the coming conflict." While we do not need to say the same thing to the State, it is well for the Church to perform the same duty as the ancient prophet; viz., to steady the State in its hour of victory, for we all know the perils of reaction. Success is a very hard thing to stand. I remember often hearing my father say: "Dick is just like most Christians: he can't stand prosperity." Dick was my father's high-blooded horse, and when he would be allowed to rest up a few days he would become so high and mighty that it was hard to hold him to the earth, and my father would say: "Dick is like most Christians: he can't stand prosperity." It remains for us to show the world that by God's grace we can win and yet be gentlemen.

The Church must insist on our being more than conquerors. Three alternatives once lay before us: Defeat, Victory, Super-Victory. The first was impossible, for defeat was not to be our portion. Well,

what about the second? Shall we be satisfied with a mere victory on the field of battle? No, we must insist on nothing less than the third—super-victory. Americans can be conquerors, but it takes Christians to be more than conquerors. The difference between the State and the Church is this: The State wins a war when it administers a military defeat. The Church of Christ never wins until it has changed the heart and mind of the enemy. We have done the first thing. We have arrested the prisoner. Now let us reform him if possible.

The Church of God can, in the words of Tennyson:

“Cling to faith beyond the forms of faith—
She reels not in the storm of warring worlds,
She brightens at the clash of Yes and No,
She sees the best that glimmers through the worst,
She feels the sun is hid but for a night,
She spies the summer through the winter bud,
She finds the fountain where they wailed ‘Mirage!’”

VIII

THE WAY OF CAIN

"Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of Cain."—JUDE II.

CAIN is an interesting character to me. He was the pioneer of the race, for while his father and mother were created, he was born. He lived in those raw days when men wore skins and lived the simple life. He knew nothing of the refinements and the restraints of modern civilization; but he lived out in the open like the beasts of the field, and when he became angry he shed blood, without any idea of the preciousness of a human life. Polite society meant nothing to him, and police were an unknown race. Rude citizen of the early days that he was, he has his lessons for the twentieth century man.

I wonder how that first father and mother watched the unfolding of the little life, which must have meant so much to them. I wonder if they never dreamed as they watched the tiny fingers that those hands would be laid in bloodshed on his brother's head. I wonder if they saw destiny written on his brow and dreamed dreams of empire for their babe. We cannot tell, but we know that the eternal fascination and mystery of childhood must have held them spellbound as they watched the bud of promise open into the flower of fulfillment.

Well, the story tells us that in process of time,

Cain ceased to have things all his own way, for a brother was born; and Cain began to learn that somebody else had some rights which he must respect. I do not know how long he was an only child, but I can't help imagining that this youngster was spoiled and that he had begun to imagine that the sun and moon and stars were built for his benefit. You know when that state of affairs comes to pass, somebody must learn a lesson—and Cain learnt his with a bitter experience.

Picture the two brothers, the one at work in his field and the other tending his sheep. Imagine a rude altar somewhere in the vicinity of the house, and watch the two men as they come to make their offerings. Cain brings some of his fruit, giving what he had; and Abel brought the firstlings of his flock. It looks as though the Almighty would have been content with this, since each man gave of what he had,—but look again. God turns away from the fruit with disapproval but accepts the burnt offering of the cattle-dealer. The farmer Cain is not used to such treatment as this—and he proposes to show his brother that his feelings cannot be hurt with impunity.

One thing that appeals to me about that early civilization is that men were honest. In modern life we cloak our feelings and smother our aches to such an extent that it becomes difficult to find the grain beneath the varnish. Oh, for less varnish and more plain reality! Cain showed his hurt plainly and God talked with him about it, but he still nursed his grudge and waited for his chance. Abel presumably did not go armed to his sheepfold, for his sheep were tracta-

able and he had no enemies. But one day he saw his brother approaching with evil in his eye—and after a few hot words, he felt the sting of a brother's anger and the blow of a brother's murderous hand. His hot blood fell upon the ground and he soon lay cold in death. The first murder was over.

It is not necessary to trace in detail the rest of the story at this point. I have simply tried to put before you the tragic case of the first two brothers, in order that we may follow intelligently the way of Cain, as he falls out with his brother and his God and ultimately his own soul. Looking down the roadway, we discover four outstanding mile-posts in the way that he followed, and these shall be our halting-places for a few moments to-day.

I. The Way of Heresy.

Cain was the first heretic. All heresy trials go back to him. All the long rôle of unbelievers and non-conformists and free-thinkers ought to honour him as their patron saint. It has been a sorry history, this story of men who couldn't accept God's way, but insisted that their own was better.

Now, what was the heresy of Cain? I admit that, as you look casually at the narrative, and see that each of the men brings his offering out of what he had (Cain bringing fruit, because he was a farmer, and Abel bringing an animal because he was a herdsman) it looks as though the Almighty were partial in accepting the one and rejecting the other. But the Judge of all the earth can be trusted to do right, and the longer we look, the more do we see that there

must be an underlying justice in this apparent caprice. Again, I ask therefore, what was the heresy of Cain? Let us see:

If we turn to the great honour-roll of faith heroes in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, we find Abel mentioned as the first hero of faith in the Bible and we read: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." Now what is faith? Faith is, in its simplest analysis, taking God at His word. Accordingly, we infer that there must have been a previous instruction to Adam and his sons, that they must approach God through sacrifice, through the price of blood. And so you observe that when God rebukes Cain and makes a last plea to him He shows him plainly that there is a way which is pleasing to Him. "Why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, a sin-offering croucheth down at the tent-door." Take the old translation, if you will: "sin lieth at the door." God wants to show Cain that the thing which separates between Him and man is sin—and that the acceptable sacrifice is a living atonement for sin.

We are prepared now to answer our question: Cain had no adequate sense of sin in his religion. His theology had not a stain of blood in it. There was no awful curse and no crying need of forgiveness. Sin was a word which had no place in his vocabulary—perhaps he thought it vulgar. Of course, he made mistakes and he was conscious of something wrong now and then, but he had no feeling of the justice of a holy God. He expected to be saved by

the work of his own hands and so these fruits which he had cultivated must be his saviours, if any were needed.

My brethren, there are a good many Cainites today, although we do not call them such. They never have a Cross on their church. They never mention the exceeding sinfulness of sin. They never sing that hymn: "Dear, dying Lamb, Thy precious blood shall never lose its power." They never have a mourners' bench where men cry for forgiveness, and they never build a city mission where tramps and bums can find a Saviour who makes them all over again new. No, they rather agree with ex-President Eliot and they adopt his new religion. But it is humorous to call that twentieth century suggestion a new religion, because it goes all the way back to Cain—and that is a good ways back.

I have been reading recently some of the literature of the Reformation time; and one is impressed with the awful sense of sin which those men had. It is quite refreshing to turn from the placidity of the twentieth century to the agony of the sixteenth,—and while, of course, the idea of penance and punishment may be carried to unwarranted extremes, yet one wonders as between liberalism and fanaticism, if the former may not be more dangerous than the latter. When Martin Luther lay on his bed of sickness, a monk repeated the creed by his bedside; and when he came to the phrase "I believe in the forgiveness of sins," there sprang up in the heart of the future reformer the light which led him on his way through the stormy days ahead. So with Myconius, another

of the reformers, who said to his son, "The blood of Christ is the only ransom for the sins of the world. O my son, though three men only should be saved by Christ's blood, believe that thou art one of those three." And so, I believe that another great revival or reformation would sweep the Church, brethren, if we could get men to crying to God for mercy and for deliverance from their sins. But of course, if there is nothing to be saved from, there is no need of a Saviour. And if there is no need of a Saviour, there is no use in joining a church which is named after His name.

II. The Way of Murder.

Cain was the first murderer. All assassins and traitors and lynchers who have taken the law into their own hands, look up to him as their patron saint. He first taught men to let their passions get the better of judgment and to let anger have its way. Every anarchist and every lawless mob is but following blindly in the way of Cain. Even the pages of Bible history are strewn with his successors in the fine art of murder;—there are at least thirty instances reaching all the way from Eden to Christ and from Cain to Barabbas. Lamech, Moses, Joab, Solomon, David, Absalom, Zimri—these are among the names of the men in the catalogue of crime; and the comment which the writer makes in the case of Zimri might well be made in every case: "Had Zimri peace who slew his master?" Had Cain peace, who slew his brother?

Have you ever read the Legend of Jubal? It is

perhaps George Eliot's most praiseworthy poem. It represents Cain as running far away from men in order that his sons may never know what death is. One day, one of Lamech's sons is killed—and his brethren gather around him in silent wonderment—it is the first time they have ever seen death—they cannot understand it; it must have been an awful revelation to man to discover that the human body could become cold and lifeless. Cain, alas, knows only too well what this strange pallor means; he had seen it in the case of his murdered brother, and had wished to hide it from his sons, but murder and death will always out. And so he pushes his way through the wondering throng and exclaims:

“He will not wake. This is the endless sleep, and we
must make
A bed deep down for him beneath the sod.”

Then the writer goes on to add:

“No budding branch, no pebble from the brook,
No form, no shadow, but new dearness took
From the one thought that life must have an end.”

Death is an awful thing, and yet Metchnikoff has argued that when men have lived their time out, there comes an appetite for death just as natural as are all of the other human appetites. And perhaps it is natural for the human spirit to desire rest and peace at home after a long pilgrimage through this world. But the awful thing about murder is that it sends a soul prematurely to the bar of God. The Almighty may have had much more earthly work for that man

to do—and here, His plan is rudely interrupted and His divine calculations brought to nought by the hand of anger. No wonder that every code of law on earth punishes with heavy penalties the man who takes another's life.

Let us notice here that crime goes further back than does law. At the time when this dastardly deed was committed there were no laws against murder. The ten commandments were not given until long after this, and even the law of Genesis 9:6, of eye for eye and tooth for tooth, had not yet been given. What shall God do with this man? He inflicts a curse upon him and puts a mark upon his body. The tragedy of Cain was that he didn't recognize the preciousness of human life—he didn't know what infinite patience and care it took to bring a life into being—he didn't know what a soul meant to God.

I raise the question whether we have yet learned, after all these years, the sanctity of life. Some years ago one of our magazines had an article with the headline, "Lives at \$75." It referred to the fact that three years after the Triangle fire in New York, in which one hundred and forty-eight lives were sacrificed to greed, the families of twenty-three of the victims, wearied in their long fight for justice, agreed to accept \$75 as the price of the life of their child. Talk about blood-money—have we come to that? Are we selling our lives at \$75 apiece in America? If so, it is time for the slave-dealer to move in. Every ten minutes of the day or night, five workmen will be killed or seriously injured in the one State of New York alone. Every minute, taking the country

as a whole, some one American dies from a preventable cause. Every five years we kill as many in our industries as were killed in the Union Army at Gettysburg. Brethren, we are following in the wake of Cain—and we shall inherit his curse. The Lord bless every effort, both of industry and society, which aims to set a higher par value on a human life. Life is all too cheap at best, but in the vision of God, man is of infinite worth, because Jesus Christ died to save him.

III. The Way of Wandering.

Cain was the first tramp. All wanderers go back to him. Listen to his wail: "My punishment is greater than I can bear. I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth and it shall come to pass that every one that findeth me shall slay me." "And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden." Cain is the type of man who tries to run away from an unforgiven past. He leaves blood spilt upon the ground and doesn't know that his own hands are bloody. He has a haunted look in his eyes and doesn't know that his whole appearance gives him away. "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." Oh, how true it is—and the latest criminologists can't improve upon that sentence. Blood has a megaphone voice. Poe tells in one of his stories of the hunted criminal who had committed murder and had hidden the body of his victim under the boards of the floor so neatly that the officers of the law didn't discover the place. But

the murderer imagines that the heart of the dead man is beating so loudly that the police can hear it as clearly as he can, and so he tears up the floor and reveals the crime—and Poe calls it the story of the "Telltale Heart." It is one more proof that crime is its own detective—the telltale heartbeat, the telltale blood, and the telltale look in the eyes of the guilty man. Thus conscience does make cowards of us all.

What do you think Cain's mark was? "The Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him." I do not know, but I rather think it was the hunted, haunted look in his eyes and his general criminal bearing. And when men saw that look, it said to them: "Don't touch this man. You needn't kill him. You needn't send him to hell, for he is in hell already. He is suffering the tortures of a guilty conscience—he is suffering from unforgiven blood—from unwashed crime. Leave him alone. He has agony enough now." Cain is the type of man described by Paul Lawrence Dunbar in the following lines:

"Good-bye," I said to my conscience,

"Good-bye for aye and aye."

And I put her hands off harshly

And turned my face away;

And conscience, smitten sorely,

Returned not from that day.

But a time came when my spirit

Grew weary of its pace.

'And I cried: "Come back, my conscience,

I long to see thy face."

But conscience cried: 'I cannot;

Remorse sits in my place.'"

The Persians have a story to the effect that one day the great Persian Sadi found a man in the jungle attacked by a tiger and horribly mutilated. The dying man's features were calm and serene, however. He exclaimed: "Great God, I thank Thee that I am suffering only from the fangs of the tiger and not from the fangs of remorse." And so, sometimes, brethren, when I have had people question me as to whether I thought hell were merely a place of physical torment, I have replied that I thought it was perhaps a place of meditation on an unforgiven past. I can conceive of nothing worse than that. Hence, as we look back in fancy to the vagabond Cain, driven like a wandering Jew from place to place, and never finding peace, we do feel that he spoke truly when he said "My punishment is greater than I can bear."

"I hear a voice you cannot hear
Which says I must not stay;
I see a hand you cannot see
Which beckons me away."

And so the self-detected and self-condemned man went his way. May God have mercy on all who, like him, carry hidden the guilty secrets of some dead past which only infinite Love can forgive and graciously heal!

IV. The Way of Godless Civilization.

Cain was the first city-builder, and all promoters and colonizers look back to him as their prototype. You will observe that God's original plan for man was a garden—the open air and the flowers and the

birds and the sunshine—and it is in the garden that the Lord walks in the cool of the day. But now that Cain has turned his back on Jehovah, he flees to the protection of city life, and so the first city was built by a murderer whose hands were red with the blood of his brother. Perhaps that is one reason why the city has always been overwhelmed with trying problems—because the initial city was a protest against God's plan.

Now you notice that civilization begins in the line of Cain, and you have Jabal as the father of cattle-raisers; and there is Jubal who was the original harpist and organist; and there is Tubal-Cain who was an instructor in brass and iron. You see we have both city and country life, and both artists and manufacturers. Here we catch the first faint beginnings of that civilization which built its monuments in Egypt and its poems in Greece and its statesmanship in Rome, and its greatest triumphs in modern Europe and America. And yet, with the open page of history before us, can we see that civilization of itself has ever been a saving power?

What does anybody think of when the expression "Modern Civilization" is mentioned? Well, most of us think at once of automobiles and telephones and electric lights and sky-scrapers and wireless telegraphy and ocean liners and submarine boats. What are all these things? Are they not merely advanced methods of doing business or increased methods of luxurious enjoyment? Is there a single one of them which serves the soul—or do they all serve the body? Is there one of them which serves God, or do they all

serve man? Is there one of them which relates to the endless future on ahead, or do they all have to do with the present life of storm and stress? Ponder these and similar questions and we soon shall see that there is little in civilization itself which denies its father Cain.

My brethren, what we need to do is to get out of the way of Cain if we are in it. Some one will quickly answer, "Oh, I'm not a heretic—I'm not in the way of Cain," but I ask, "Wait—do you take God absolutely at His word? If not, you are tending slightly in that direction." Another says, "I'm not a murderer—I'm not in the way of Cain." Yes, but listen to the higher interpretation of the murderous spirit made by Jesus: "Ye have heard that it was said, 'Thou shalt not kill'—but I say unto you, 'Who-soever is angry with his brother without cause shall be in danger of the judgment.'" Another says, "I'm not a tramp; I'm not in Cain's company." Yes, but are you not perhaps running away from some unforgiven sin or are you content with your past? And still another says, "I'm not given over to godless civilization—for I live in Christian America." But I imagine Jesus would reply, "I say unto you, Except your righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

And so, beloved, it all comes back to this—what way are you on? Watch your mile-stones—do they point upward or downward? I am reminded of my experience in a certain cross-country drive. We followed the Blue Book and when we came to any fork

of the roads we would watch very carefully to see if the landmarks in the landscape tallied with those noted in the book; and if they didn't, then we knew we were on the wrong road and we went back to the previous fork and started over again in a different direction. Watch your landmarks, I say,—and if they are any of the things I have mentioned—go back to the fork of the road and start out on the path marked with God's love and mercy and it will lead you home. "The way may lead through darkness, but it leads to light at last."

"Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me;
And in God's house forevermore
My dwelling-place shall be."

IX

COMPULSORY ATHEISM

"Ye have taken away my gods which I made, . . . and what have I more?"—JUDGES 18: 24.

YOU remember the story of the college president who was greeted by a bumptious youth on the campus one morning with the remark, "Professor, I fail to find any satisfactory argument for the existence of God." The wise preceptor remarked, "Young man, you must find a God before evening or else leave this place." The rebuke was well deserved, for this was a case of elective or preferential atheism, in contrast to that of my text, which was compulsory atheism.

It is a stirring picture which greets us in this eighteenth chapter of Judges. A tribe of Danites are on a tour of migration from their home down by the sea, up to the foothills of Lebanon. There are six hundred men, armed to the teeth, besides women and children. At the time our story opens the caravan had come to the house of Micah, an Ephraimite, where some of the leaders recognize an old friend in Micah's young priest. Now, men who go forth to steal land do not hesitate to steal gods; and so one of the leaders says to the crowd: "I have a secret. I know where we can get some gods which will make

our company eminently respectable. See yonder little chapel? It is fitted up in the most approved style. Now I have given you the tip. The rest is in your hands."

Well, I can see the mob in fancy as it swarms into the courtyard of the house and stands at a respectful distance, while the five spies who attended the chapel on their first trip go into the little church and dismantle the altar and bring out to the mob their ready-made gods. For, mark you, if this is to be an up-to-date caravan, it must be equipped with images—only vulgar crowds are atheistic. But alas for the preacher as he sees this wrecking company at work; and so, before they walk off entirely with his religious furnishings, he finds his voice and exclaims: "Would you gentlemen object to explaining to me why you are walking off with my church?"

And now notice their tempting reply. They constitute themselves into a pulpit-committee and promptly tender him a call to a larger parish. They say to him in substance: "Your field is very limited here. You don't want to spend your days as Micah's private chaplain, when you might be the pastor of a whole tribe of Israelites." And the young man didn't take very long to pray over this call. I judge he thought he must either go with his gods or lose his occupation, and the call of bread and butter is a very imperative one. "And the priest's heart was glad, and he took the images and went into the midst of the people."

Turn now to what was going on in the house after the marauders had departed. Poor Micah very soon

discovered his loss, and raising a company of his neighbours, started out to overtake the robbers. Some distance down the road he came upon them and called to them to halt. They turn as if in great surprise and ask, "What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company?" And his reply is the verse which I have chosen for my text: "Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away: And what have I more? And what is this that ye say unto me, 'What aileth thee?'" He is advised to restrain his grief for fear some of the rougher members of this gentle company may make him pay dearly for it. "And when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back to his home."

Such is the quaint old story which I have labelled "Compulsory Atheism." The man is made godless against his will. He had fitted up his little hillside chapel with laborious care; he had spared no expense on his pantheon of gods, he had secured a regularly ordained Levite as his chaplain. Surely he had a right to expect the favour of heaven. Such a man does not want to have his religion stolen suddenly by a band of emigrants, even if they do need it more than he does. Micah did not have enough religion to export; he needed it all for home consumption. But what can a man do when six hundred armed robbers invite his deities away? He can do nothing but go back to an atheism which is all the more pardonable because it is involuntary. And so we take leave of the Ephraimite whose story we have thus briefly resurrected from its dead past.

"His bones are dust,
His good sword rust—
His soul is with the saints we trust."

What is the modern message from the ancient narrative? There are some things of abiding significance in the cry of the injured Micah. All unconsciously he traverses three steps in the evolution of religion in his exclamation. His gods were manufactured, they were stolen, and they were all he had to tie to. "Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and what have I more?" Let us call the three steps: Idolatry, Iconoclasm and Idealism. We survey these in detail.

I. Idolatry: "My Gods Which I Made."

Idolatry is religion made easy. It is worship while you wait. It brings the absentee god near. It is an illustration of the unconquerable desire for objectivity which is a characteristic of the Oriental and Mediterranean peoples. There is undoubtedly a certain fascination about seeing God both by eye-gate and mind-gate. If the inventive genius of this twentieth century were to try its hand on improving religion, it might get some pointers from Micah; for it is vastly easier to concentrate the distracted mind on a thing than a principle. And the most uncompromising Protestant cannot but feel the appeal of a visible emblem of the Unseen. They tell us that He is "Closer than breathing, Nearer than hands and feet." Yes, we believe it; but oh, that we could touch Him! Here comes the blessing of the crucifix or the image or the eikon. It is silence breaking into speech,

it is Spirit breaking into matter, it is God dwelling in wood or marble. It is in a new sense, Immanuel—God with us.

The idol-worshipper stops with second causes—he doesn't trace the storm or wind or fire to their real Source. He would say that the trolley explains the electric-car, because it is the most evident thing about the car—and hence you would have a cult of trolley-worshippers. Similarly he would attribute the physician's skill to some power resident in the knife, and a luscious bunch of grapes to the kind grape-god hiding in the vine. And so of course the sun and moon and stars shine by their own light instead of reflecting the smile of God; and thus the idol becomes an arrant thief, stealing the worship which belongs to the Power behind the throne. But it is a time-saving apparatus; for just as Micah saved himself the trouble of going to Jerusalem to worship by having his gods near at hand, so the savage saves his mind the trouble of the journey into the unseen—the journey that Job took, for example, when he cried out, "O that I knew where I might find Him." The idolater knows—here He is. And so it is a very convenient form of religion, could we but accept it.

Only recently we read of an incident which took place in or near Singapore. The natives believe that spirits reside in trees, and these Tree-spirits are appeased by incense-sticks which are placed in or near the tree. One evening a rich young Baba, one Lee Khia Guan, who had been educated at Cambridge, was strolling with a friend; and happening on one such tree, he saw a number of joss-sticks burning at

its roots. He laughed at the crude superstition of the natives, kicking the sticks over and trampling upon them in glee. His friend remonstrated with him, as they resumed their walk, saying that "there might be something in it," and that for his part he preferred to leave such things severely alone, as he had heard of cases where accidents had happened to persons who interfered with such trees. Guan ridiculed the idea of haunted trees as a belief of the ignorant coolies. Three days later, while he was on his way to town in his motor car, just as he passed under this tree, a high branch fell right across the car, killing him on the spot and demolishing the entire front part of the car. Of course the tree-spirit did it. Here you have an example of the rise of idolatry, by the transformation of second causes into first cause. This is precisely what the Old Testament Semites did—they invested each spring or tree or mountain-top or cave with a "baal" or proprietor; and to him a high-place was built, and a stone pillar set up and a "beth-el," or house of deity, dedicated.

Would that we might stop there, with the Semites and the Malays—but we cannot. Bishop Heber's hymn must be rewritten, for the American in his blindness bows down to flesh and blood. New York alone has a Vedanta Society of 5,000 members. Seattle has its Buddhist temple, San Francisco its Hindu shrine, Los Angeles its Krishna organization, Chicago and Lowell their Zoroastrian temples, and a modern Mohammedan cult has its new church in the Illinois metropolis also. The Congress of Religions in 1893 is to be thanked in part for the in-

vasion of America by heathen idols. And so we need a few Home Missions to ourselves, as well as Foreign Missions to the places where "only man is vile." Here woman is vile as well.

A still more personal question remains before we pass from this point. Even those of us who are nominally Christian find others beside Christ on our altars. The Egyptians had the fiction that the gods when pursued by their enemies had to take refuge in the body of an animal, and hence their reverence for the brute creation. Ah me, the Son of God would have to take refuge in a pile of gold or some other mundane creation to win the worship of some of His followers! It is told of one specially religious African tribe that they fill their huts and hovels with so many idols that there is hardly any room left for their families. Well, I can think of people closer home than Africa, who not only crowd out their families with their gods—they even crowd out God Himself. Oh, beloved, shame on us in these heathen-Christian days. I know it is a hard thing to fling from your altars the gods of many years, but may the Lord help you to do it! Now is a good time to register your vow in the hymn we sing:

"The dearest idol I have known,
What e'er that idol be—
Help me to tear it from Thy throne
And worship only Thee."

II. Iconoclasm: "Ye Have Taken Away My Gods."

You will not find this crime on the statute-books of the State to-day, and yet there is none more

heinous. A man may steal my purse and my home and even my good name rather than my god. And yet there are those who make a business of doing just this very thing. There have always been and always will be men who have gotten tired of divinities, and who cannot find any trace of God through telescope or scalpel or even in a sunset. Now, if they do not want a god for themselves, that is of course their business and their loss;—but one would think they would let well enough alone and let him have gods who would. No, they must needs cleanse the world from the defilement of deity.

One thinks of Tennyson's plea which is still needed:

“O thou that after toil and storm
Mayst seem to have reached a purer air,
Whose faith has centre everywhere,
Nor cares to fix itself in form—
Leave thou thy sister when she prays,
Her early heaven, her happy views;
Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse
A life that leads melodious days.”

The writer can never forget a personal experience. In the seminary days when the youthful theologian knew it all, he made a pilgrimage to the old manse, where, among others, lived a little sister whose simple faith was never disturbed by roving bands of Danites. He happened to make some chance remark about the original form of the Lord's Prayer. At once the little sister's face was clouded and the eager voice remarked, “Why, Herbie, isn't the Bible true?” The sting of that question will never be erased.

Once and for all the young theologian resigned from the ranks of the Danites. He will not be a demolisher of shrines where some repair, whose shoes' latchet he is not worthy to unloose!

But there are Danites to-day who have not resigned. One might speak of a certain type of science, or of a materialistic philosophy, or of Marxian Socialism, which insists that it is the duty of every Socialist to erase the name of God from the universe. Or one might think of Schopenhauer or Renan or Voltaire or Ingersoll or Knapp or a thousand others; but many of the brave Philistines of the past have long since fallen. I like that story of Chaplain McCabe, who read one day as he journeyed on a railway train, the speech of Robert Ingersoll the night before in which he prophesied the speedy decease of the Church. The chaplain stopped long enough at the next station to send the following telegram to Ingersoll: "Dear Robert. All hail the power of Jesus' name. We are now building one Methodist church a day, and propose to make it two." And so I feel like sending a similar wire: "Dear Danites. Fire away. Nobody minds you. The Son of God goes forth to war. Come and join our happy band."

An atheist named Lewis Knapp erected a series of tablets in the cemetery of Kenosha, Wisconsin, in order to perpetuate his peculiar sentiments. He worked for years on the composing of the inscriptions, and when they were completed they made up one of the most remarkable arraignment of the Christian religion known in history. Men came thousands of miles to read and copy the words, and it is

said that when they were sent to a foundry to be cast upon monuments of metal which would withstand fire as well as the elements, the men working in the foundry went on strike because they feared they might call down upon them the wrath of the Most High. But the infidel spent his money and time for nought, for the surviving relatives of Knapp are not in sympathy with his atheism, and some years ago they signed an agreement that the monuments be taken out, broken into small pieces, and the débris either buried or thrown into the lake. So perish all the King's enemies!

There is, however, a type of iconoclasm which is decidedly helpful, rather than hurtful. Hezekiah was a benefactor to the people when he took hold of the brazen serpent which had outlived its day of usefulness and broke it in pieces before the people and said: "Quit worshipping that thing—why, it is nothing but a piece of brass." "And he called it Nehushtan." I like this idea which some well-meaning men are putting forward, of having an illuminated cross on the roof of our great sky-scrapers, not to protect the man on the fifteenth floor but to point the harassed traveller in the street upward to God. And I shall favour the plan until God becomes nailed to the cross; when that happens, some modern Hezekiah must mount the roof and shatter the cross into fragments and call it "Nehushtan." For, as the poet reminded us, it is only when the half-gods go that the gods arrive. Better a bare altar and God than a hundred lighted candles but no Saviour. Victor Hugo says that Waterloo was lost because Napoleon

bothered God; I tell you, when demigods get in the way of God, they ought to be overthrown. It behooves us to remember this, when we find that we are loving something better than God.

But it goes without saying that it's a mighty poor god that is capable of being stolen; then it ought to be stolen; there is need of some theological scavengers always. Paul was one such: he was fond of showing that the Old Testament types had been superseded by the New Testament reality. The key-word of the Epistle to the Hebrews is "better"—and this very word is an example of Pauline iconoclasm. Jesus Himself was regarded as an image-breaker by His enemies: this Man who would destroy the temple and build it again in three days was surely a dangerous citizen and had better be taken to His cross. All down through the history of the Church there have been braves who have dared to defy custom and blaze a new way to the throne of God. Luther shattered all precedents when he nailed his theses to the church-door; and to-day Billy Sunday offends the sensitive when he turns his sledge-hammer invective against the modern Church. Let us be patient; for the great sin of which the iconoclast is guilty is that of being born too soon. The reformer of to-day is the conservative of to-morrow; and so it is that we build pathways to the graves of the men whom our forefathers stoned.

III. Idealism: "And What Have I More?"

Micah's cry has been often repeated in the history of religious experience. "Don't take away my images,

for I have nothing beyond them." When our Roman Catholic maid entered for the first time a Protestant church she cried out in surprise: "But where are the pictures?" She could not conceive of worship apart from her gods. When the Mohammedan prays he must needs face Mecca, for he has nothing more in prayer than the physical localization of God in a place on the maps. So it is with some of our friends of the liturgic churches, who go so far as to say that they do not feel they have been to service at all unless they have bowed the knee in the prescribed form. We are all more or less in bondage to the superficial; and hence we have a fellow-feeling with the man who was converted in one of Mr. Sunday's meetings out in Iowa. This man came into the tabernacle one day after the meeting and spread out on the platform a large napkin akin to the tablecloth in its size. He said: "I want a lot of shavings and sawdust." "What for?" "I'll tell you: I want enough to make a sofa pillow. Right here is where I knelt down and was converted. I would like to have enough to make a sofa pillow, to have something in my home to make me think of God. I don't want to forget God, or that I was saved. Can you give me enough?" The evangelist replied: "Yes, indeed; and if you want enough to make a mattress, take it; and if you want enough of the tent to make a pair of breeches for each of the boys, take your scissors and cut it right out, if it will help you to keep your mind on God."

Now of course, this is all very superficial; as religion in its early stages always is. It is only skin-

deep. It is a kind of pious rash, or a theological measles. The man cries out helpless, "What have I more?" And if the Danites come along and proceed to tear the scaffolding down, he cries as though the house were falling in. If the silly oxen shake the ark, he puts forth his hand like Uzzah to steady it and keep it from falling—and he probably gets Uzzah's reward for his pains.

We are in danger to-day, it seems to me, of living on the surface. We exaggerate organization and minimize inspiration. We pin our affection to the accidental instead of to the real things. We are told of a man who wanted to kill himself when the Holy Roman Empire fell. We read of a Baltimore woman who suicided when a beloved pastor was removed. We all know of congregations which have been wrecked over the building of a new edifice and the discarding of the old. People come to love the holes in the wall and the bricks in the building. Have we gone very far beyond the heathen, after all, with his gods of wood and stone? "He made as though he would have gone farther, but they constrained him, and he went in."

I can suggest an appropriate epitaph for some dead churches that I know. I would write over their closed doors this superscription: "Killed By Machinery." We set up so many wheels and belts and levers that some day accidentally we become ensnared in the red tape ourselves and die a miserable death. There is a Chinese story of a soul which was lost in church: early one Sunday morning a mob gathered before the doors of the church at Ningpo, demanding

admission. Their motive was a serious one. A weeping mother led the way, and she explained to the missionary that her little boy "had lost his soul in the church the day before, and she wished access to the interior to look for it." The child, who had been playing there, had been taken with a sudden fever on going home; and was then delirious. In delirium the soul was supposed to be absent, still hovering in the hall of the church. Accordingly the relatives entered the church with a bundle of the boy's garments, and prayed the strayed soul to perch on the bundle and return to its resting-place. This done, they departed, firmly persuaded that they had captured the vagrant spirit of the lad. It is only a Chinese superstition, but it carries its own moral: the soul of religion is often lost in the church, and prayer must be offered for its return.

Oh, brethren, the need of the dying world to-day is this "Something more" that Micah lacked. There is a mystic plus, a great beyond, an undiscovered country on beyond the sacraments and the ritual, if we could only find it. The center of the great Welsh Revival was said to be the "rediscovery of God." And I believe God stands ready to revive His formal Church as soon as it will put Him in place of His images. But there must be some heart-breaking demolition of altars first. I have read of a family who had built a new home, and being people of religious tendencies, they had made a family altar of perfumed wood, and were considering where to place it. The mother insisted on its being placed in the kitchen, since that was the place of her trials. The

father, however, favoured the library, for a like reason. The son suggested the reception hall, where it might be seen by all visitors. The differences of opinion were so great that the family fell to quarrelling—and so the father referred the question to the little baby-girl. She was wont to sit before the fireplace and watch the flames; and so, when the matter was left in her hands, she said, “The fire’s nearly out. Let’s put it on the fire.” And so she threw the altar on the dying embers, and it soon burst into flames, the fragrance of the perfumed wood filling the house. The altar had fulfilled its mission, but it had to be cremated first. So may God destroy all our household gods, until He, whose right it is to reign, shall reign—

“From sea to sea, and shore to shore
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.”

X

THREE GREAT ELEMENTS IN RELIGION

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."—JOHN 13: 17.

THE text vindicates, it seems to me, the existence of three fundamental elements in religion. It falls from the lips of Jesus in connection with a most commonplace incident. He is not discussing the psychology of the soul, nor girding Himself for some great pronouncement. It is just one of His obiter dicta, a saying flung off by the way, and yet it contains in brief compass the whole philosophy of the Christian life. It is a plea for knowledge which issues in activity and brings happiness in its train: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

What a great word it is for the twentieth century! For we live in a pragmatic age. The demand of the day is for a religion that works. The time was when a man was revered for what he knew, but now mere knowledge is discounted at the bank of reality. Then again, there was a time when the heart was elevated above the head, and a man was honoured because he felt. But in our rushing days the hand takes precedence of both head and heart, and the question asked of the applicant for fame is

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not "What do you know?" nor "What do you feel?" but "What can you do?"

"Fading away, like the stars of the morning,
Losing their light in the glorious sun—
Thus would we pass from the earth and its toiling,
Only remembered by what we have done."

It is related that a Japanese student at Tokio who had entered a Christian college purely for the sake of education, with the intention of retaining his Buddhist faith, was won to Christianity by a rare exhibition of doctrine incarnated in life. The students rebelled on account of the poor accommodations, and this Japanese was one of a deputation of two sent to remonstrate with Dr. Williams. The good man listened patiently to their grievance and then said, "I cannot let you suffer in this way, for I expect you one day to be the leaders of Japan. Now, I have a nice room with a southern exposure; you two must take that, and I will take your room." It was the speech of a Christian gentleman, who believed not merely in prating about the cross, but in "doing the doctrine," as the Koreans say. And this workable and working faith won the young Japanese without further argument, reconciling him not merely to his room, but better still, to Christ.

May I take an illustration from the business world, which may throw some light on the psychology back of this text? I ask the advertising man something of his program and I find that it is mightily like that of Jesus. He flings out in broad headlines his startling facts—first of all he must give information—the passer-by must know that hats are on sale.

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Then next he aims to touch the emotions and to inspire the reader with the desire to own one of those hats. Now comes the crucial point of his whole transaction—he has utterly failed unless he has compelled the response of the will: that is, unless the information and the desire have resulted in the act of purchase. He is not concerned that this chance stranger shall know that he is selling hats; nor is he satisfied to make him want a hat; his object is to sell the man a hat. He must get results. And I believe our Lord Christ was something of a pragmatist, for He was not content with notions or even emotions, but insisted on motions.

Religion has been defined as the soul's response to the revelation by which it is illumined, kindled and moved. You will observe that this definition includes in its last three verbs the same elements I am discussing. There are some people for whom religion stops in the first stage—they are content to be illumined and so they believe in Christ historically. Again there are others with whom religion means the indulgence of feeling, and they stop at the kindling of the emotions. But the sort of Christian which Christ approves is the man who undergoes the discipline of obedience—he translates his creed into his life; he is moved.

Now it is interesting to observe that the three chief forms which religion has historically taken correspond to these three elements of human nature. The speculative form of faith is represented by theologians and philosophers, who are mainly interested in a religion of the head. The ritual type is

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represented by priests, who are mainly interested in a religion of the heart. The legal form is represented by the scribes, who are mainly interested in a religion of the hand. And these three species may be seen exemplified in three of the great religious systems; that of the intellectual type in Brahmanism, that of the emotional in Buddhism, and that of the volitional or practical in Confucianism or Mohammedanism. It is our boast that Christianity is greater than any of these, in that it is not merely a system of thought, or a ritual of worship, or a fashion of life, but that it commands the whole man; it is not merely knowing or enjoying or doing, but all of them in one. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

To put the same matter in another way, we say that to be a Christian involves three things: belief, confidence and trust. Belief is an intellectual process, confidence an emotional, and trust a volitional process. The first two are involuntary; a man cannot compel himself to believe a statement, nor to repose confidence in the Man of Nazareth. But he can *will* to trust Him, and so hand over his life to His keeping. Perhaps Professor James, instead of writing of "The Will to Believe" would have done better to have discussed "The Will to Trust." Let us proceed to notice these three elements in detail.

I. Knowledge: "If Ye Know."

You cannot build a house without a foundation. Nor can you build religious emotion on anything less stable than facts. The weakness of some present-

day preaching is just in this: that it seeks to arouse emotions, without anything to base them on. Mr. Mallock in his book "Religion as a Credible Doctrine" has a paragraph on "The uselessness of emotional apologetics," in which he stresses this thought. He shows that the change in religious attitude and belief which the last sixty or seventy years have witnessed, has originated, not in a decline of the emotion, but in a decay of the beliefs which justified the emotion. The way to remedy the defect, therefore, is not to work oneself up into an excitement, but to appeal to the reason, that is, to show that religion is a credible doctrine. A fireman keeps his engine going, not by applying the bellows to the smouldering coals, but by putting on more coal.

It needs to be emphasized again that knowledge is power. "A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength." In spite of Rome's teaching to the contrary, ignorance is not the mother of devotion. Christianity is not a pious glorification of stupidity. A Christian is not a member of the Know-nothing party, and religion is not the same thing as superstition. Jesus never said "Blessed are the empty, for they shall be filled." Dr. Vance puts the same thought well: "Nature abhors a vacuum, and Grace does not glorify it." The brother who thanked God for his ignorance probably had a good deal to be thankful for.

I read a sparkling article the other day on the Value of Ignorance. The author insists that it isn't well to know too much, and that Galileo and Copernicus and Columbus tore things up considerably by

their discoveries. He seeks to prove his point by showing that every pioneer or inventor or saviour has been ostracized or spurned or crucified. Prometheus and Lucifer and Bruno and John Brown and Jesus of Nazareth all paid the price for interfering with the world's ignorance; for every new fact acquired becomes the enemy of human happiness. Well, we cannot agree with these findings. Truth has been crushed to earth, but she rises again. She has been crucified between two thieves, but the long years have always justified her, soon or late. Accordingly our Lord has bequeathed us a religious system built on facts, and Christianity must either stand or fall by these facts. She welcomes investigation, and challenges the microscopes and telescopes of a critical world to aid her in the discovery of truth.

Mere knowledge, however, will not suffice. Dr. Patton has well shown that, judging the two men Paul and Christ merely by brain-power, so far as this can be judged by their recorded sayings, Paul was the bigger man of the two. There are other tests, however; for transformation is better than information. Hell is full of learned heads, and a man may go to perdition repeating as he goes the articles of the Creed of Chalcedon. The Five Points of Calvinism will never in themselves build up robust Christian character, any more than an architect's blue-print will furnish a comfortable place to live. No, we must relate truth to life—we must incarnate it, before it becomes worth while. And I fear me there are many professed Christians who know religion just as the schoolboy knows South America; he can show you

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where it is on the map, but he has never been there. You can usually tell, when you hear two men describing the same place, which one has been there and which one has read Stoddard's lectures.

The matter of church creeds naturally suggests itself here. There was a day when a knowledge of the Confession of Faith was regarded as a prerequisite for the Christian life; but we have now come to see that all credal forms of expression fail to take the place of an experience of spiritual truth in the soul. The old elder who insisted on an answer to the 107 questions of the Shorter Catechism, before he voted for the reception to church membership of a class of boys and girls, is dead; and may he rest in peace. Granted that our modern youth know all too little of our doctrinal standards, yet we believe the shifting of emphasis has been justified. It is as though our Lord stood silent, listening to some glib recitation of the creed and then, when it was finished, quietly answered: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." And across the intervening centuries there is wafted to us, as an echo of the text, the peroration of the Sermon on the Mount: "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock."

II. Emotion: "Happy Are Ye."

The text says that it is a justifiable thing to be happy in religious work—in other words it suggests

the place of emotion in the Christian life. The search for happiness has engaged the mind of man ever since man began to be. Now, Jesus Christ was no ascetic who bade men crucify the emotions; but a normal thinker who realized that each individual must have some beatitude. The thing He did, therefore, was to take that ideal, that Utopia, that beatitude and give it the richest possible content. He told the world of happiness-seekers that joy was to be found in doing known duty.

Now, this is a new discovery of Jesus: that happiness is not an end to be sought in itself, but comes by the way. It cannot be manufactured directly, but is a by-product; in making something else, you produce it accidentally. If you are journeying on the straight and narrow-gauge track of duty, Happiness gets on board at one of the way-stations; but if you telegraph ahead for her to be sure to meet you, she will not be there. Josh Billings puts the thought in his quaint way: "If you ever find happiness by hunting for it, you will find it, as the old woman did her lost spectacles, safe on her own nose all the time."

Assuming, then, that the Christian is bent on doing the will of God, he ought to be a happy man. We read that Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and that the joy set before Him held Him on His lonely way. It is true, as President Wilson says, that we do not live on intellectual planes at all, but on emotional planes, planes of resolution and not planes of doctrine. Therefore, we must in our preaching lay siege to the emotional level of the hearer's life, not because we are going to neglect the rest of his nature, but because this is the

most inflammable plane of his being, and the presumption is that the fire which starts in the basement will burn to the attic. The hope is, that if we can reach his heart, we shall ultimately reach his will. In line with this was the judgment of Dr. Chapman the evangelist, who gave as one of the reasons why ministers fail, the fact that they try the wrong method of approach, by the head, instead of by the heart. He held that argument invites argument, and for every point that you advance, the mind of your hearer advances a dozen. The better avenue of approach is the broad highway of sorrow and joy which Jesus chose in the Sermon on the Mount—and, for example, instead of arguing the question of purity of heart in its effects on mind and life, He simply said: "Happy are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

You wouldn't want a religion which appealed only to the mind. Mr. Balfour has well shown in his "Foundations of Belief," that any system of religion which was small enough for our intellectual capacity could not be large enough for our spiritual needs. Romanes is a case in point: he had rejected Christianity because his head was not convinced by its arguments, and he refused to allow his heart to have anything to say. When he discovered that the heart was just as good a witness as the head, he let it plead its case, and to his surprise, it won; and he came straggling back to God.

Oh, give us a religion with a soul, with magnificent enthusiasms and splendid audacity. I like the man who rose in an inspiring meeting and said, "Mr.

Chairman, I move we move the world." Let us have zeal, even though some of it may be zeal without knowledge. Why is it that many college men are failures? Because they are crammed full of facts—but so is a dictionary, and an encyclopedia. What is the trouble with a dictionary? It is, that it cannot translate into emotion or action the things it knows. It will tell you several pages-full about missions, yet never enthuse over them. It will describe philanthropies, yet never do a charitable deed. So whatever you are, don't be a dictionary. If you know these things, why don't you do them?

Matthew Arnold's definition of religion comes to mind. "Religion is morality touched by emotion; it is ethics heightened and kindled and lit up by feeling." Ah, you cannot have Christianity without tears—you may have ethical culture without them. Unitarianism is religion without the Cross, without emotion, and is little better than philosophy. And I believe the reason why it does not challenge a larger public following is simply because most men have a heart. And so, while emotion may be sadly overdone, yet God deliver us from doing away with it entirely, for it makes the dry bones of logic to live, and turns cold ethic into warm-blooded passion for the eternal God.

III. Will: "If Ye Do Them."

It is better not to know, than to know and not to do. This is good psychology and it is good theology. Professor James teaches it, and so does Paul. You remember the illustration which the Professor uses, of the Russian countess who sits at the theatre on a

cold winter night. Her emotions are played upon by the sad scene depicted on the stage, and she sheds copious tears; and yet all the while her coachman is shivering on the box of her carriage outside. She does herself a wrong to allow the emotion of pity to be excited by an imaginary case, while she refuses to allow it to play on the chords of daily life. Just here is the trouble with New Year's resolutions. As we pass from one year into the other we are temporarily impressed with the solemnity of the flight of time, and under the stress of momentary excitement, we make vows which we never intend to keep. And when the year has gone, we are reminded that the path to perdition is paved with good resolutions, while the path to heaven is paved with good performances. By this test we can tell which way our path is tending. Do we take out our enthusiasm in mottoes framed on the wall, and pledges signed and put away into dusty archives? Or do we translate our creed into character and our promise into performance?

Students of art will tell you that the reason why the arts attained so high a degree of perfection in the Middle Ages was because the men who had the mind to design and conceive worked out their ideas with their own hands. Raphael and Angelo and Cellini did their own work. They not only had visions, but they turned those visions into marble. In the language of my text, they not only knew, but also did. This same program will make a man not only an artist, it will make him a Christian.

One of the greatest things which Jesus did for religion was to make it practical in its nature. There

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are other systems of faith which merely require their devotees to memorize the creed or to turn the prayer-wheel mechanically. But Christ teaches a religion which finds a practical outlet into life. The Acts of the Apostles is not merely a New Testament volume, but a daily reincarnation of the spirit of the Nazarene. We talk about translations of the Bible—do you know the best translation of the Bible I have ever seen? It is the Bible translated into life, into new manhood and womanhood and childhood. When Jesus took the twelve disciples into His school of training, His object was not to tell them a lot of new things and then graduate them with cap and gown and degree. No, He took them to transform their lives, and make them epistles known and read of all men. Instead of knowing books, they were to *be* books.

The most amazing revival of the Church since Pentecost would break out to-morrow if its members would begin just to do what they know. The whole modern missionary movement goes back to that unforgettable day when the cobbler Carey had the audacity to ask at a Baptist assembly if Christ's command to the apostles to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature was still binding. As soon as he knew, he went and did—and the world knows the rest. Carey is one of the heroes of missions, and yet after all, all that he did was simply to make the connection between his intellect, his emotion, and his will.

It all comes to this: whether we are willing to bridge the gap between theory and life. There are

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many other men besides Moses and Jonah and Ananias who have run away from duty. Many a man takes ship to carry his feet in the opposite direction from his head. He knows where he ought to go, but insists on buying his ticket the other way. The picture of Jonah running away from the call of God, and buying his passage to Tarshish when duty lay in the direction of Nineveh, is a parable of life. "Are you going to spend your whole life saying 'ought'?" asks Bernard Shaw. "Turn your 'oughts' into 'shalls,' man." That is what we need to do.

"I said: 'Let me walk in the fields.'

He said: 'No, walk in the town.'

I said: "There are no flowers there."

He said: 'No flowers, but a crown.'

"I said: 'But the skies are black;

There is nothing but noise and din.'

And he wept, as He sent me back—

'There is more,' He said, 'There is sin.'

"Then into His hand went mine;

And into my heart came He;

And I walk in a light divine,

The path I had feared to see."

In the year 1900, foreigners of Peking were besieged by the Boxers. The various powers had landed their forces near Tientsin. One morning a council of war was held in the latter city to determine whether the international army should march on the capital. One after another of the commanders—British, German, French, Russian and Japanese—rose and solemnly stated that the advance must necessarily

be futile. After all the rest had spoken, however, General Chaffee, the American commander, arose in his place, not to make a speech, but only to utter a single sentence. "I desire to say that the American troops will march for Peking at 9:30 to-morrow morning." And march they did. And the others went with them, and the siege was raised without a single serious battle. Do you know why General Chaffee was so determined in his stand? Because the day before that meeting in Tientsin he had received a cablegram from Secretary Root which read as follows: "March at once on Peking. The American nation is behind you." Ah, my brethren, would that the soldiers of the Christ were as loyal as those of the United States. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

XI

THE PROGRAM OF A PROGRESSIVE LIFE

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize."—PHILIPPIANS 3: 13, 14.

I LOVE the Epistle to the Philippians. It is a pastoral letter written by a preacher who had been arrested by the Roman Government, to a people whom he loved. I think Paul was more devoted to the Philippians than to the people of any other church he had founded, because they stand out above all others for their cordiality to the man who had brought them the Gospel. Their church had now attained eleven years of growth, and yet had not forgotten him. At this particular time Epaphroditus had arrived after a dangerous journey, bringing with him supplies for the Apostle's wants, and Paul sits down and writes a letter overflowing with appreciation and gratitude.

I wonder if I may make a comparison. Paul loved the people of his parish. So do I. They had responded freely to Paul's needs and desires. So have mine. They were singularly free from the factions and troubles of many of these early churches. The same is true of my people. But Paul feared that just because things were going so well with them, they might become self-satisfied, and get into a rut of com-

placency, and cease to grow and develop in the Christian life. So do I. Hence, he wrote them, when he was half through with his letter, the words of my text: this appeal for progress, this call to the heights, which I have taken for our meditation to-day. Is it not an appropriate message for us as we stand on this first Sabbath of our new Church year—the program of a progressive life: “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize.”

Did you ever see a man unlock his soul? That is what Paul does here. He unlocks the safety deposit vault of his very being in these five verses which cluster about my text. He puts all the passion of his life into five words: “that I may know Him.” We stand in the holy of holies of the Apostle. He shows us the ground plan and specifications of that wonderful career. Here you have his Thirty-nine Articles, his Confession of Faith, his Shorter Catechism, Magna Charta, Declaration of Independence, Footpath to Peace,—all in one. My text is his five-pointed star, his formula for success. Somebody once wrote a pamphlet entitled, “How to Succeed—Five Cents.” Here Paul tells us without cost. Let us listen to him.

You can very easily touch the five points of the star: “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended”—first of all, a discontented present; “but forgetting those things which are behind”—a forgotten past; “and reaching forth unto those things

which are before"—a beckoning future; "This one thing I do"—a unified aim; "I press toward the goal for the prize"—a strenuous race. We have thus run around the circumference and touched the points of the star. Now, let us move in from the periphery to the center. Let us get at the heart of Paul's program if we can.

I. A Discontented Present.

Well, there is hope for any man who begins that way: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; I do not claim to have reached the top." These perfectionists who claim to be completely sanctified, these smug warriors against the Devil who go around wearing a sign saying, "The war is over—don't touch us, we're just waiting for wings,"—they get on my nerves. They remind me of so many of those Eastern people who come out here to spend their declining days. They have had the struggle and the fight back beyond the Mississippi, and they have come out here to die in peace, and they don't want God, or the Church, or the preacher, or anybody else that represents struggle or effort, to bother them. They say, "Let us alone." Did you know that the expression "Let us alone" occurs only twice in the Word of God—once in the Old Testament, and once in the New? In the Old Testament reference, the foolish Israelites said to Moses, "Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians." Away back there this plea was a denial of progress. "Let us alone. Don't lead us out. You might start something." And Moses certainly did. The New Testament reference is the cry of the

devils in the Capernaum synagogue: "Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth?" And that is what the entrenched devils of crime and wrong always say: "Let us alone." But the sons of God always reply, "Carry on."

So I am a preacher of discontent this morning. I am glad the Bible does not say much about being satisfied spiritually. "I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness." In other words, don't adjust yourself comfortably in an easy chair and go to sleep, for you don't belong here; you are due to go higher yet. Your motto is, "Excelsior." In Chesterton's story, "The Man Who Was Thursday," the men are named after the several days of the week, and the crowd get angry at the man who was Sunday, because he stood for rest and quiet and contentment; while the man who was Thursday represents dissatisfaction with the present order, and the striving for better things. Sunday was the Stand-patter of the old régime, while Thursday was the Progressive who was trying to usher in through storm and tumult the better day; and between the two, my sympathies are more inclined to Thursday than to the other.

The Present Tense is an awful tyrant. Over many a grave it might be written: "This man died of the present tense." God pity the man who could never say "To-morrow," and who could never say "Yesterday," but must only say "To-day." What if you had neither memory nor imagination—nothing but toil? If the memory of yesterday were obliterated, and the hope of to-morrow banished, and nothing left but the work of to-day, a man would shrivel to a

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meager soul. I am not going to rest in the mud of to-day. I am going on to the stars of to-morrow. I am not going to take a fifty-year lease on this little home on the side street. I am going to have a brown stone front on the avenue. I am not going to do business in a two-by-four shop forever. I am going to have a department store some day. I am not going to ask for some sort of spiritual soothing syrup to lull me to sleep. I would rather pray for a thorn in the flesh to buffet me and keep me forever pegging, pegging on my way.

Kipling puts the idea well for us in his poem, "The Explorer."

"'There's no sense in going further—it's the edge of cultivation;'

So they said, and I believed it, broke my land and sowed my crop;

Built my barns and strung my fences, in the little border station

Tucked away below the foot-hills where the trails run out and stop."

(Then the man seems to become satisfied with the present tense, and to lose the call of the beyond.)

"Till a voice as bad as Conscience rang interminable changes

On one everlasting whisper, day and night repeated—so:

'Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look behind the Ranges—

Something lost behind the Ranges; lost and waiting for you—Go.'

So I went, worn out of patience; never told my nearest neighbours."

(Of course not; they would have glued him there.)

"Then I knew the while I doubted, knew His hand
was certain o'er me.

Still it might be self-delusion—scores of better men
had died.

I could reach the township living, but . . . He
knows what terrors tore me;

But I didn't, but I didn't. I went down the other
side."

Nothing is more tragic than a lost ideal. Paul uses a word in this text which is significant. He says, "I am pressing toward the goal for the prize"—and what is the prize? Not the high calling of God—that's the old translation. The prize is the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus. You see there is the climbing still. Even the goal is not stagnation, but progress: so that there is no such thing as standing still in the Christian life. The Christian is like a man riding a bicycle: he is either going on, or else he is going off. Here are two artists I bring before you for the sake of contrast. One, standing before his latest production, burst into tears exclaiming, "I shall never do anything great again, because I am satisfied with my work." There was the tragedy. His hand had caught up with his brain, and there was no room for growth. On the other hand, the widow of the great artist Opie said that in the nine years she was his wife she never once saw him satisfied with his work. Often he would enter the room and throw himself down in despair, crying, "I shall never be a painter as long as I live." That is the healthy dissatisfaction which means progress. So it is in the

Christian life. I remember the letter which Dr. Speer says he received in the Foreign Mission Board office some years ago from a man on the Pacific Coast who was offering himself for missionary service, and he began by saying that he had entirely consecrated himself to the Saviour's work. He said he had been fully and completely baptized with the Holy Spirit, and he felt he was entirely qualified for the work required of him. Dr. Speer's first comment after reading the letter was this: "Now, what can you do with a man like that? Is there any hope left for such a man?" The trouble, my friends, with the man was, that he had caught up to his stars. He forgot that an ideal is by hypothesis unrealizable, and the Foreign Board people thought that he had never read Philipians 3: 12. I commend it to all who think they have graduated with honours from the University of the Christian Life. Ah, but give me, on the other hand, the men of the long look and the distant vision, who say:

"We were dreamers, dreaming greatly, in the man-
stifled town;
We yearned beyond the sky-line, where the strange
roads go down."

II. A Forgotten Past.

Paul made a parenthesis in this letter. He had been talking about family trees, and he said: "Now, just by way of parenthesis, I will tell you something of my own family tree. The fact is, I am somebody." And then after telling them how his "ancestors came over in the *Mayflower*," he says: "But don't misunderstand me. I am not counting on social position.

I leave all that for Christ. To be sure, I have written some great epistles, and founded some noble churches, and been caught up into paradise, and heard things which it is not lawful for man to utter. But whatever my past has been, I have forgotten it all. I am pressing on to Him."

Now, it is a significant fact to me that God has so made us that we always face frontward. We turn our backs to what is behind us. What is more pathetic than to see a man with his face turned the wrong way? A friend of mine saw such a man in a museum in New York City, and he said: "He reminds me of some of the officers of my church; he can never see a thing until after it has happened." Lot's wife is a standing illustration in Scripture of the tragedy of the backward look. At a time when progress was the demand of the hour, and her safety consisted in going forward, she insisted on looking back, with the result that she was enveloped by the salty flame; and Jesus, looking back to her across the chasm of the centuries, said with warning voice, "Remember Lot's wife."

Thank God, the Gospel I preach says a man can forget his past. When Byron's "Manfred" is dying, he summons the spirits to his bedside and asks them to wipe out his past, to which they make reply: "It is not in our power, it is not in our essence—but thou mayest die." And when he eagerly asks, "Will Death confer it on me?" they make reply, "We are immortal, and do not forget." Of course there is a sense in which my past clings to me and hounds me like a shadow; but Jesus taught that a man belongs not to the place he is coming from, but to the place he

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is going to. That is why He said to the dying thief, "To-day—Paradise." The place the man came from was Latrum, but Jesus made him a resident of his new home. The life he came from was awful. The life he was going to was clean and beautiful. Jesus turned him right about face for heaven. So when the scarlet woman was brought to Jesus, the difference between the attitude of the Jewish policemen and the attitude of Christ was due entirely to the different things they were looking at. The men looked at what she was; Jesus looked at what she was going to be. They said she was a sinner, and must be stoned. Jesus said, "Go into peace and purity." And away she went from her ramshackle, tumble-down past, out into the glorious light and liberty of the children of God.

Christianity is the annihilation of Yesterday. One thing Jesus loves to do for a life is to shut the door on the room we call Yesterday, and open up the door of the room we call To-morrow. He likes to let a little sunshine in. You remember the man who came to Moses and said, "Aren't you the man who slew an Egyptian yesterday?" Yesterday! Who cares what you did yesterday? You don't belong to Yesterday. God owns it, and you have nothing more to do with it. It is in the cemetery, and your place is not among the tombs. God is willing to forgive all your blood-red yesterdays if you ask Him, and give you a certificate entitling you to a clean To-morrow. Over in Dresden some years ago a sort of Jean Valjean was discovered. A certain Mr. Charles May, an author and a millionaire philanthropist, was living there, re-

garded as one of the foremost citizens of the kingdom. Along came a socialist who unmasked his identity, and proved him to have been a desperado of forty years before. That is always the way when somebody tries to live down his past: these unholy grave-diggers get together, and try to unearth the skeleton of the day before yesterday or the year before last. In the name of the dying Jesus who forgave the repentant thief, let bygones be bygones! This was Colonel Hadley's plan in the work of the Water Street Mission. He said he never inquired into the record of any one, no matter how dark it was; for God was willing to forget, and why should not he do so?

III. A Beckoning Future.

When David Livingstone broke fresh ground among the Bakkhatlas, he wrote to the London Missionary Society explaining what he had done, and expressing hope of their approval. At the same time, he professed his willingness to go anywhere they wished to send him, with this one proviso: "Anywhere, provided it be forward." That is a good motto for any life and for any Church: "Anywhere, provided it be forward."

The thing that makes life worth while is the gap between the actual and the ideal. God has purposely made this gap pretty wide, and we have to fight our way out of the trenches of the past, over the no-man's-land of to-day, into the enemies' castles of to-morrow. How often you catch this note of struggle in Paul. Hear him in the Epistle to the Colossians,

as he tells the people of Colosse that he is preaching and warning and teaching and labouring and striving and working—six verbs crowded into one sentence. Why? “That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” Hear him again when he says, “Till we all come to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” And listen again in the words of our own epistle: “That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, I put myself on the stretch,”—that is the original—“I agonize, reaching forth to the prize and the goal beyond.” So, I say, that is the thing that makes any life worth while, to have beyond itself a goal so big and high that life becomes a continual struggle to attain it.

Now, Jesus Christ alone, of all religious teachers, offers you such a worthy goal. Confucianism, for example, puts the prize lower down, and within easier reach. When Mr. Wu Ting Fang was in this country, he said that his criticism of Christianity was that it offered an unattainable goal, while Confucianism did not. But this is the blessing of Christianity instead of its curse. I remember hearing an old minister say: “I don’t like that hymn, ‘I want to be an angel, and with the angels stand.’” He said: “I don’t; I want to be a sinner, saved by grace.” So say I, for the angels have never known the luxury of the struggle which you and I know. You college men know how they do in athletic meets. They have a receding goal. It is like what Paul calls “the upward calling.” I have stood out in the stadium of old Washington University and watched the men in the pole-vault and the hammer-throw and the 220-yard

dash. I remember especially in the case of the pole-vault, how the man would go over the tape at a certain height, and then what happened? They honoured the man by giving him an ever heightening goal, so that he must continually say, "I press toward the mark for the prize." No matter if he had already broken the 'Varsity or the State record; he must still fight on, for other honours were waiting to be won.

William Watson puts it well in "The Dream of Man," when he represents God as saying to His creature, man, that the latter's lot was more blessed than His, because of the blessing of struggle. God is represented as saying:

"I taste not the delight of seeking,
Nor the boon of longing know;
There is but one joy transcendant,
And I hoard it not, but bestow.
I hoard it not, nor have tasted,
But freely I give it to thee—
The joy of most glorious striving,
Which dieth in victory."

IV. A Unified Aim.

Paul could never do a thing half-way. He was an intense man. He threw his whole soul into what he did. He was not like the man described by the writer of an obituary in a country newspaper, who said the deceased had been a Christian "off and on for forty years." No, Paul was either entirely off or entirely on. He knew it was dangerous to be half on and half off. When he was a lad sitting at the feet of Gamaliel, he did just one thing: he got an education. When he grew up and became an orthodox

Pharisee, he did just one thing: he made it hot for any Christians who came his way. When he was converted by that divine sunstroke on the Damascus highway, he asked just one question: "What wilt thou have me to do?" And from that time on he could say, as one of the later saints of the Church said: "I have but one passion: it is He."

Need I illustrate the power of concentration in daily life? We all recognize it. When the famous DeWitt, one of the busiest statesmen of his time, was asked how he was able to do so many things, he said that his whole art consisted simply in doing one thing at a time. A friend asked Sir James Scarlett what was the secret of his preëminent success as a lawyer, and he replied that he always took care to press home the one principal point of the case, without paying much heed to the others; he hammered home one point. And just as the world has always said, "Beware of the man of one book," so we may equally well say: "Beware of the man of one aim; look out for the man of the single eye." St. Jerome was pastor of a large congregation, but he had one burning ambition. He said to his people: "It is of necessity that the New Testament should be translated. You must find another preacher. I am bound for the wilderness, and shall not return until my task is finished." So away he went with his manuscripts into the desert, and laboured and prayed until the task was done, and he gave to the world the Latin Vulgate, which will last until the end of time, because he was a man of the unified aim. And so it is always. Boys who like Confucius' son try to master too many things, who

scatter their energies too widely, need a wise father to say to them, as Confucius did, "Omit some of your pursuits, and you will get on better."

The business world has long since applied this motto of Paul's. Big business advertises for specialists, not for "also rans." The world wants a man who can set type, sell insurance, run a Corliss engine, write a poem, paint a sunset, preach a sermon, better than any other available man. It won't do for a man to reply, "I can paint a little, and write a little, and preach a little." No, the world would say to such an one: "You remind us too much of a crazy-quilt. You suggest succotash. What we want is an expert." And for a motto the world goes back to Paul: "This one thing I do."

Now then, it remains for me to say that we ought to have kingdom specialists as well as worldly specialists. If Edison could sit up all night to make his machine pronounce the letter S, it seems to me somebody else should sit up all night to save a soul. If people will canvass the city for Liberty Bonds, it seems that other folks might canvass the city for Foreign Missions. You run on your track, and let me run on mine. But just because your engine pulls into a station called Business Success, and mine pulls into a terminal marked Heaven's Approval, that does not mean that your engine ought to work any harder than mine. Oh, men and women of the successful business career, give some of that splendid energy over here to the engine on the other track, so that Jesus Christ and His cause may go over the top as well as everything else.

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V. A Strenuous Race.

Paul proceeds here on the method of postponed surprises. He lifts the curtain just an inch at a time. He keeps us on tiptoe waiting for his main verb. Everything else has been in the nature of a participle statement. Let me rewrite the text thus: "Brethren, not being satisfied with present attainment (yes, there is the discontented present), and forgetting those things which are behind (yes, there is the forgotten past), reaching forth unto those things which are before (the beckoning future), this one thing I do." (Well, hurry up, Paul; tell us what it is; you have kept us waiting so long for the main verb): "I press toward the goal." "There it is," says Paul, "I am using the figure of a Roman runner."

Now, let us see how aptly the figure applies. Fancy a runner, a trained athlete, down in the Roman stadium, with the balconies full of eager eyes watching him and the other contestants as they strive for the mastery. Well, of course it stands to reason at the outset that he must be dissatisfied with present attainment, for if he is perfectly content he will stand where he is, and all the others will pass him by. No hero was ever bound by the chains of the present tense. Then again, he must forget those behind him. Often you will hear the trainer giving directions to the athlete, such as to count his steps and watch the footprints of the men in front of him, but you will never hear him tell him to look around at those behind: not at all; he forgets the rear, and he courts the front. Then again, he reaches forth unto those things which are before, keeping his eye ever

fastened on the judges' seat. He concentrates. He does just one thing. For him the whole universe is shut out that day, and there is only one thing worth while, and that is, winning that race. Fancy somebody calling from the sidelines, "Oh, runner, your house is on fire." He would reply: "Never mind; let the fire company put it out; I am winning this race." Fancy another saying, "Oh, athlete, quick! your bank has gone to the wall, and the investments of the years are lost." "Never mind; let Wall Street worry about the bank at the wall; I have no time to stop now; I am winning this race." So you come to the last thing Paul says: "I press toward the goal. I put myself on the stretch. I expect no seven-league boots to carry me over the course. I shall fight my way to victory."

Isaac Watts was certainly a typical Christian athlete when he wrote the words:

"Must I be carried to the skies
 On flowery beds of ease,
 While others fought to win the prize,
 And sailed through bloody seas?
 Are there no foes for me to face?
 Must I not stem the flood?
 Is this vile world a friend to grace,
 To help me on to God?
 Sure I must fight if I would reign;
 Increase my courage, Lord:
 I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
 Supported by Thy Word."

I remember so well an incident of my college days. Dr. Hall, our Professor of Greek, had a boy known all over the college as "Son Will." Will was not

fond of Greek, but he could run. So on the long hot afternoons, while the rest of us pegged away at Greek drama, Son Will would be excused, and would go out on the 'Varsity course and train. When the day of the meet came, the boy's mother asked Dr. Hall if he were going out to see Will run. The Professor replied in the negative. "Why, Will couldn't win anything; he couldn't even parse a Greek verb"—which was conclusive logic. Well, to make a long story short, the Professor went. At first he looked on languidly. He did not care to have anybody know he was there. He knew Will couldn't win. As the athletes started out, Will was last. There were six runners, and he was No. 6. Dr. Hall said to himself, "I told you so." After the first lap, however, Will had passed No. 5, and was fifth himself. After the second lap, he was fourth. After the third lap, he was third. Then he began to let himself out; he had been husbanding his strength; and Dr. Hall said he found himself reaching for his handkerchief. After the fourth lap Will was second in the race, and they had only one more lap to run. Just as the racers passed the spot opposite to the grandstand, with half a lap yet to go, Dr. Hall found himself waving his handkerchief frantically, and crying out, "Go it, Will!" Will sprinted up and passed his opponent, and dashed home winner. Then Dr. Hall turned to the bystanders and said, "That is my boy." Will had pressed toward the goal for the prize.

Now, my friends, you and I are athletes too, after a bigger prize than Will was after, "the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus." We are not always

overwhelmed with rosebuds, or deafened by applause. We sometimes think the people in the grandstand do not care whether we win or lose. But we take heart when we remember that Paul won, and Jesus of Nazareth won, and countless others have won, without much applause. So we patiently keep on, and if we fall one of these days—well, I have made up my mind I shall just ask three questions of the kindly soul who picks me up off the dusty race-track of life: "Was I far from the goal?" "Yes, a long ways off." "Were there many others ahead of me?" "Yes, there were many who were nearer to the goal, better acquainted with Jesus Christ, and more developed into His likeness than you." Well, just one more question: "Was my hand reaching forward when I fell?" "Yes." "Then I die in peace."

XII

GOD'S STANDARD MAN

"As his custom was."—LUKE 4: 16.

EVERYTHING is being standardized these days. Efficiency tests are all the rage. We are marked so much on our sleeping, breathing, eating, thinking, to see whether we can make a passing grade. Our soldier boys had to be of a certain height and build, and just before they embarked there was an examination of their teeth. They had endurance tests, nerve tests, sight tests, and almost every other test. Not only our soldier boys, but our babies as well, are measured and weighed and catalogued and listed: so that all you have to do is to compare your child with the standardized, idealized, perfect child, in order to see what percentage of health he has. The idea of standardization is entering every domain. Our movies must come up to certain requirements, else they shall not pass. Our milk must have so much butter fat, else it may not be sold. Our examination for life insurance must grade such and such, else we are declined with thanks. Our pails and scales must be approved by the inspector of weights and measures. Our autos must climb the

Sixth Street hill on high. Our watches must be graded by the Kew test for heat and cold and double positions. Our safety appliances must be examined by the public inspector thereof. Our Browning guns and Liberty motors must be scrutinized to the last detail. Our giving must be up to a certain quota, else our city will fail to reach its standard and go down in disgrace. So it goes.

Now the only thing that gives us pause in all this is whether our standards themselves are correct. I do not want to set my watch by a regulator if the regulator itself is wrong. And yet, I cannot expect perfection anywhere on earth. Mrs. Gatty in her "Parables from Nature" tells of a young minister who was something of a musician, who in an emergency undertook to tune the church organ. He tuned it perfectly according to the scale of notes used, but when he struck the keys of Haydn's Mass in five flats, dreadful discord was the result; and an organ tuner afterwards explained to him that his scale was right, and his system right, but too close adherence to a perfect tone was his trouble. Most fifths had to be left a little flat, some few sharp, and the octaves alone tuned in unison, because the organ is an imperfect instrument. Wonderful music is possible by allowing for a degree of imperfection. This is a parable of human life. We have to tone down our standards for the sake of harmony and peace.

"There's a fleck of rust on a flawless blade,
On the armour of price there's one;
There's a mole on the cheek of a lovely maid,
There are spots on the sun."

Here, then, is my main proposition. War has demoralized many of our old standards. Many have become colour-blind to moral distinctions. The old Greek said, "Panta rei," "Everything flows;" and in the flux of these days and the storm of the times, some of the old piers we used to tie up to are in danger of being washed away. Therefore, if there is anything permanent, anything stable to which we can tie, any unalterable standard by which we can judge ourselves, let us to it by all means, and see what we register. This is what the artist does in working with colours. He fears that he may become confused in his judgment of shades, and hence keeps certain standard pigments on his palette all the while that he may compare his judgment with them when he fears to trust himself. So in the realm of moral standards, we turn to one White Life which was lived as man has never lived before or since. Jesus of Nazareth standardized manhood. He was a one hundred per cent. Christian. He passed God's efficiency test, and this was his diploma: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him."

I am aware that there are many who do not accept Him as their example. One of our modern thinkers has said that there is something incongruous in the idea of the twentieth century Christian modeling his life on that of a first century Jew. There are others who, like Emerson, do not regard Him as the ultimate manifestation of Deity. They are well answered by the argument of the gentle-souled Whittier, who replied to Emerson that if Jesus was not the ultimate, He was at least the best representation of God who

had yet appeared on this earth. Therefore, until further notice it was the part of wisdom to follow Him. So I hold Him up to you as the nearest standard ideal Life the world has ever seen, and I say if we can get an idea of what His customs of life were, they will contain suggestions worthy of our following.

Now the visit of Jesus to Nazareth gives us a bird's-eye view, a pen picture, so to speak, of some characteristics of a standard Christian life. Let us notice them in turn.

I. The Standard Christian Life Begins in a Christian Home.

There is something very beautiful, at the same time pathetic, to my mind, in the scene before us. It is the springtime of the year, and at the same time the springtime of Jesus' ministry. He has just been through the baptism of the Spirit and the temptation in the wilderness, and here at the threshold of His public ministry He turns for His inaugural service to His old home. How naturally His feet took the familiar road to Nazareth! How often He had roamed through its streets with His friends, and climbed the hill back of the town for a view of the valley in one direction and the mountains in the other! Yes, He loved Nazareth just as any man loves the place where he has been brought up. There is no place so dear to me as Baltimore. I lived on an ugly old cobble-paved street in a humble part of town, but my heart throbs whenever we near Baltimore. On my recent Eastern trip, when the train entered Maryland I went

and stood on the rear platform, to be able to see in all directions, because it was my beloved Maryland.

Very well. Let this geographic fact become a moral truth to us. The tendency of adult life is to revert to the Nazareth where we have been brought up. How important, then, that that Nazareth should be the proper kind. Science tells us that the brain is plastic in youth, and the paths made in the brain by youthful impressions are much deeper and more lasting than those of mature life. So it has been well said: "Convert a man, and you win an individual; convert a child, and you win a multiplication table." The seed there sown will spring up into an abundant harvest. In every schoolroom throughout British Columbia notices are posted which read: "Stop—Look—Listen." You see the idea. If they can implant the idea of caution in the minds of those children, the winds may blow down all the signs with which the roads are at present placarded: the youngsters won't need them, for they will have an inward monitor; they were taught caution at Nazareth, and the man always comes back sooner or later to the streets where the boy played.

The Church has not awakened to this fact, and hence the modern emphasis on religious education. Nobody ever heard of directors of religious education a few years ago. They were born because society discovered the importance of Nazareth. Why, if Nazareth is growing children, Nazareth is a thousand fold more important place than the college, which is growing scholars, or the barracks, which is growing soldiers, or the seminary, which is growing preachers.

Very well, how is your Nazareth getting on? "What is my Nazareth?" you say. Well, your Nazareth is a composite place. It is the nursery where the boy plays. It is the whole atmosphere he absorbs. It is the street where he romps, and the friends he makes. It is the public or private school. It is the Sunday school where he learns about God and Christ. Are you giving the attention it deserves to Nazareth? For if Nazareth is neglected, there is no use in trying to make up for it by getting awfully interested in Jerusalem or Samaria later, for Nazareth is the place where the battle is either won or lost.

Alberta, Canada, has an official branch of the government known as the Department of Neglected Children. Every city needs one such. How many Topsies there are who were never trained, but just grewed. Of course I am not denying the fact that God's grace can reach out and capture men and women far beyond the nursery age. God can find a man in Samaria if he has got away beyond both Bethlehem and Nazareth, and as long as He reaches him before Calvary the man may be saved. But how much better to win him at Nazareth! Somebody has figured out how much cheaper it is to prevent a youth from going wrong than to cure him after he has gone wrong; and while I have not the figures at hand, the contrast is startling. Here, then, is a plea to all parents for some attention to Nazareth. If Joseph and Mary have been blessed by high heaven with the gift of a son, then in heaven's ledger they are debited with that amount, and to balance the account they should be able to present that boy one day a Christian man

before the presence of the King with exceeding joy. At least, they ought to be able to certify that they have done their part; and God will then tell the recording angel to credit them with the salvation of the boy who was loaned to them for training so many years ago.

II. The Standard Christian Life Recognizes the Value of Proper Habits.

"As His custom was." Oh, well, then, the cantor of the synagogue didn't look up in surprise when Jesus entered. He didn't say to himself, "Somebody must be ill at Mary's house, and they are suddenly getting pious." Jesus wasn't like those people who only come to church when there is a wedding, or a funeral, or a friend coming from the East to visit them. No, He was a regular. The Book says it was His custom to go to church. Without going any further at present than these words, "as His custom was," I wish to call your attention to the necessity of forming proper habits in the Christian life.

What is habit? Psychologically, a habit is an avenue in the gray matter of the brain. The first time you do a thing you cut the road, and every succeeding time you dig the road deeper, until finally you do the thing automatically, and you say: "Oh, I never have to think about that; it is just second nature to me." Well, the fact is, you have cut the road so deep that the wheels can't get out of the track if they try to. But this is Scripture as well as physiology. Take that verse of the Eighty-fourth Psalm, "Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee, in whose heart are the ways of them." I used to wonder what it meant.

Take the new translation. The revised version says "in whose heart are the highways to Zion." There you have it. There are highways in the heart long before there are highways on the map. So the Psalmist is thinking about some humble Jew who has so often travelled in thought up to the Temple that the highways in his heart or brain are tramped as hard as the Roman roads which Cæsar built. We all have highways in the heart, and we ought to build these roads to the right places.

Habit can be made either our enemy or our friend, according to the construction of these highways. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, poet and philosopher that he was, ruined his career by becoming enslaved with the opium habit. "As his custom was," he took the drug day by day. Hartley Coleridge, a brilliant son, formed the habit of intemperance. "As his custom was," he took one drink, and then another, until he was a wreck at thirty-five and a corpse at forty-seven. This was the man, by the way, who had written several tragedies at the age of nine, was an accomplished Greek scholar at twelve, and a fellow of Oxford at twenty. He failed because of wrong habits. Benjamin Haydon, the painter, was hailed as the greatest artist of centuries on his arrival in London. Scott and others went wild with delight over his work. Yet he paid no attention to proper customs, but impatiently cried, "Genius was sent into the world not to obey laws but to give them." "As his custom was," he laughed at limits, and he died the death of a pauper, a debtor, and a suicide. A celebrated count fell into the habit during his Nazareth years when in

the nursery, of begging the nurse for ten minutes' more play before being put to bed. It followed him through life, and when as a captain he found himself with his men in a perilous place, "as his custom was," he delayed ten minutes too long, and sacrificed himself and his braves to the enemy.

But the picture is not all black. Habit can be made a friend as well. That is the great truth which is taught in Locke's "The Glory of Clementina." A certain Quixtus has become cynical at the age of fifty. He believes goodness is a mockery, and hence plans at one turn of the wheel to become a three-ply devil. In a passion of bitter rage, he swears all the evil things he intends to do. But he had failed to reckon on one thing: he had the habits of fifty upright years to contend with, and he soon discovered that the customs of half a century could not be overturned in a moment. Nazareth bore fruit, and the fifty years' training saved the day for God. Since this is so, let us set about the formation of the right kind of religious habits, for the great laws of habit apply just as much in the spiritual world as they do in the physical. God knew that we were creatures of habit when He crowded the Sabbath in, once in every seven days. We don't leave other things to chance. Why should we pray just when the notion strikes us? We don't eat that way. Your employer does not pay you that way. Why treat your soul that way? Why not have a schedule for salvation, as well as for soup and baths? The fact is, that it is only in comparatively recent times, and in connection with Protestant churches especially, that the power of habit has been

neglected. Under the Romish system, all the details of life were laid down for monks and nuns, as well as for the laity: so many hours for devotion, so many for sleep, so many for eating, etc. Now, this can easily become abused, and all rules become ridiculous when carried to excess. Custom hardens into law, and instead of being a convenience, becomes a burden. But the fact that a thing can be abused is no reason why it should not be rightly used. And so I commend to you that you make your religion more businesslike, as well as your business more religious. I believe in the Christian who gives one-tenth of his money and one-seventh of his time to the Lord as a matter of custom and habit. Therefore do I believe that those four little words of my text are so important, that they should be printed not only on the church calendar, but on the hearts of every congregation.

III. The Standard Christian Life Recognizes the Value of Church Attendance.

What do we read? "He went into the synagogue." That is why I smile at people who say they do not need to go to church. They are so spiritual that they have gotten above the need of such primitive things as public worship. Indeed! I always feel like saying to them this: "My brethren, do you remember the very first thing Jesus did after He had received the baptism of the Spirit, and proved Himself conqueror over the Tempter? According to Luke, the very first thing He did was to go to church. Now, if any human being ever had the right to say

the Church was not a necessity for him, Jesus had; and yet, He was not too good or too holy or too brilliant to go. Oh no, my friends, you will have to fetch up a mighty big argument to answer me on that proposition, for over against all you say I shall simply present that one picture of the Son of God a humble worshipper at the ordinary synagogue service at Nazareth that day."

To make the point clearer, let me describe to you the service Jesus attended. The synagogue, as you know, was an institution which grew up not by divine appointment, but in response to the exigencies of the situation, possibly in the time of Ezra. By the time of Christ, the order of service was fixed and invariable. The supreme moment of the service was the reading of the law,—not the sermon, as with us. The reading of Scripture was preceded by the opening prayer, and in this prayer there were several distinct portions. It began with the recitation of the Shema (three passages in Deuteronomy 6, Deuteronomy 11 and Numbers 15). Then came the eighteen blessings. During this recitation the people stood with faces turned toward Jerusalem. The reciter of the prayer stood before the chest containing the manuscript. Any member of the assembly could be called upon by the president to perform this duty, and Jesus very likely took His turn at these opening prayers. The people answered with a loud "Amen" at the close of each petition. Then came the reading of the law. The Chazzan took the sacred roll out of the chest, removed the case, and placed it before the first reader. The seven members chosen for the reading of the law

rose in turn, and read some three verses each. The Chazzan remained all the time close to the reader, and watched that he made no mistake, and read nothing unsuitable for a general audience. After the reading was added a sort of commentary or homily, which later developed into the sermon in Christian churches. When the reading of the law was over, the one who recited the opening prayer read a portion from one of the prophets. This was called the closing lesson, because it completed the service. The reader read three verses, and then translated them into Aramaic. In the story before us, Jesus read this closing passage in the synagogue at Nazareth. You observe that Jesus read only two verses, and this was allowable because He wished to make some comment upon them; and so instead of reading three verses without comment, He read two, and then preached a short sermon. After the sermon, the final benediction was pronounced, and the assembly broke up.

This, then, will give you some idea of the service Jesus attended that day. Think you there was anything particularly thrilling or inspiring to Him in such a service? Yet, He went. And why? Well, I can tell you several things that did *not* induce Him to go. He did not go merely because it was customary, or popular, or conventional, for Jesus was delightfully unconventional when occasion demanded it. He would not have perjured His soul just to do what others were doing. Again, He did not go to show off His new clothes, for He did not have any so far as we know. He did not go to meet His friends, as though the Church were a social club. Nor did He go

to hear fine music, or an elaborate sermon, or lengthy announcements. He did not go to get new business, or more votes, or a higher social standard. No, He went for none of these things. Well, why, then, did He go? To answer the question, we must remember that the whole Old Testament presupposes the public worship of God. There is no explicit command, either in the Old or New Testament, so far as I know, which positively enjoins public worship, but it is taken as an assumed fact all the way from Deuteronomy 12: 5 to Hebrews 10: 25: "Even unto his habitation shalt thou seek, and thither shalt thou come." "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is." So our Lord placed the stamp of His approval upon the custom of going to public worship, both to glorify God and to encourage fellow worshippers. The Christian, then, who passes up public worship must have some later revelation from the Almighty to that effect which the Scriptures know nothing of, and he must be a superior individual to Jesus Christ, who found it necessary to go. James Freeman Clarke puts it pretty well when he says: "The sermon might be stupid: then I should not listen to it. The prayers might not suit me: then I should pass them by. The music might grate on my ear: I should try not to hear it. One would be there, greater than the temple, greater than its prayers, its liturgy, its priests, its ritual: my brother man, bowed before my Father, God. If I did not go to church for anything else, I should go for this."

IV. The Standard Christian Life Recognizes the Value of Sabbath Observance.

I like to ask three questions with reference to the visit of any person to any place: *Where* did he go? *Why* did he go? *When* did he go? Suppose I tell you, then, that Jesus found Himself in Nazareth one day; the question you naturally ask is: Where will Jesus go in Nazareth? Then, why did He go? and when did He go? We have the three answers. He went to the synagogue, for the purpose of worship, on the Sabbath Day. The Jewish synagogues of the time were open every day for three services; but as those of the afternoon and evening were always joined, there were really only two. It was the duty of every godly Jew to go to each service, for daily attendance was regarded so sacred that the Rabbis taught that he who went regularly saved Israel from the heathen. Three days, however, were especially sacred. These were Monday and Thursday, which were market days, when the country people came into town and the courts were held; and then of course the weekly Sabbath was the third special day for worship, and hence Jesus went on the Sabbath Day to the synagogue.

In order that we may have a sane standard in this matter of Sabbath observance, let me contrast the attitude of Jesus to that of the time in which He lived. We learn from the Mishna some of the peculiar customs and laws of the time. The day before the Sabbath was called the day of preparation, on which all work must be finished. A tailor might not go out carrying his needle near dusk on Friday even-

ing, lest he forget and carry it a moment after sunset, for this would be breaking the Sabbath, which of course began at sunset on Friday night. If a housewife started to fry meat, onions, or eggs before sunset, she must make sure to have them done before the Sabbath began. In the case of our Saviour's death on the cross at three o'clock Friday afternoon, Joseph and his friends had to finish the temporary burial and reach their homes before sunset. This explains the haste with which Jesus was taken down from the cross, and also the fact that the embalming of His body could not be finished until Sunday morning, spices being prepared after sunset Saturday night. A person could not walk on the grass with nailed shoes on the Sabbath, for this was a kind of threshing. One could not catch an insect on one's body, for this was a kind of hunting. It was seriously debated whether you ought to eat a fresh egg on Sunday, because the egg had probably been prepared by the hen on the Sabbath Day, and therefore you were encouraging the hen to break the day of rest. If a man was suffering from toothache, he was forbidden to take vinegar in his mouth if he spat it out again, but he was allowed to take it if he swallowed it. A sailor in a storm would refuse to touch the helm after sunset. As late as 1492, when the Jews were expelled from Spain, they were reduced to living on grass; yet on the Sabbath they would not pluck the grass with their hands, but groveled on their knees and bit it off with their teeth. A few years ago in Jerusalem a fire broke out in the Jewish quarter on Saturday; but as the law forbade kindling fires on the Sabbath, they

supposed it also forbade extinguishing a fire, and consequently three young girls were burned to death who could easily have been rescued. So the Jews have been known for centuries all over the world for their readiness to die rather than break the Holy Day.

Into the midst of this superstition came the sane and standard Christ. Now, He must be very careful, for He knew His example would guide His followers all through the years to come. How did He observe the Sabbath Day? That is a fair question, and I think it may be answered in three simple statements: (a) Jesus by His actions upheld the general use of the Sabbath Day as a day of rest and worship. He observed the usual requirements of the law, except when these conflicted with some higher principle. It was customary then, as now, to give a festive turn to the day by wearing the best clothes and having the best provisions obtainable, and Jesus probably fell in with these and other innocent requirements. (b) Jesus held that the well-being of man was more important than the rigid observance of the Sabbath as interpreted by the Scribes. He believed in a sound mind in a sound body, and hence performed many acts of healing on that day. (c) Jesus taught that the ceremonial observance of the Sabbath should give way before any higher or more spiritual motive. One manuscript inserts the following words after Luke 6: 5: "On the same day, seeing one working on the Sabbath, He said unto him, O man, if thou knowest what thou doest thou art blessed; but if thou knowest not, thou art accursed and a transgressor of the law." That is to say, the man is pronounced

blessed if he is breaking the trammels of the law in response to some higher call; but if not, he is guilty of Sabbath desecration. Let us, then, take these three principles, and the example of Jesus, our great Pattern, down into the problem of Sabbath observance to-day. It is confessedly a big problem, but if we shall faithfully seek to follow our great Guide, we shall have light enough to walk by, I am sure.

V. The Standard Christian Life Recognizes the Value of the Word of God.

Read this fourth chapter of Luke, and ponder the scene as I have done. The Master was probably recognized when He came into the synagogue, and the attendant asked him to read the closing lesson, handing him the roll of the Prophet Isaiah. Jesus knew His Bible. I have wondered what words He would have read from the other prophets. At any rate, He knew His Isaiah, and turned at once to the passage He wanted, and read it. Now, here is the interesting thing. Listen! "And he closed the book, and gave it to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him." The point is, He attracted general attention just from *the way* He read the Scripture, and before He had made any comment at all. Some preachers rush from the Scripture to get to their sermon, but not so with Jesus. He must have read it with unique emphasis and intonation.

One commendable thing, then, I find in this old synagogue order of worship: The great moment of the service was when the law was uncovered and

read. The sermon itself was only a translation into the language of the people, with a few comments or explanations. We have given the sermon the place of supreme emphasis, but they did not make that mistake. Man's comment was secondary, and God's was primary. They were right, and we are wrong. I enter in fancy their synagogue. There it is, on the highest piece of land in the town. The end opposite the entrance points to Jerusalem, and there at that end are the seats of the elders, and in the midst of these is the ark in which the roll of the law was preserved. I see the Rabbi take the scroll from the ark and reverently unroll it in such a way that the congregation may not look upon the writing. I note that my Lord stood up to read, for the law was that one must stand while reading the prophets, and might remain seated while reading from the historical books. I like to imagine myself one of the congregation. Don't you wish you could have been there? I know my eyes, like theirs, would have been riveted on Him and I know I should have hung on His words. I see Him as He takes His seat. I see the people nudge one another and say: "Is not this the carpenter's son?" Then I hear again His brave, stinging words. I see the gathering storm as their brows wrinkle, and the leaders rise from their seats, and a mob forms, and they hustle God's Gentleman out to the brow of the hill to murder Him—for His sermon. And then I come to myself, and I say: "Maybe if I preached God's Word as He preached it, they would want to murder me too," and then I remember my theme, and I exclaim, "If He is God's

standard man, what chance have I?" And I cry out with the question of Josiah Conder:

"How shall I follow Him I serve?
How shall I copy Him I love?"

The only answer I know is to put His life up against my poor imperfect one, and like the child of the copy-book, try to make my poor scrawl of a life more and more like the perfect pattern at the top of the page. God help us all to keep struggling on, "till we all come to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"!

XIII

NEAR-SIGHTED NAZARETH

"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James . . . ? And are not his sisters here . . . ? And they were offended at him."—MARK 6: 3.

WELL, that was a pretty good biography of Jesus for twenty words, wasn't it? It reads about like a city directory. Name: Jesus of Nazareth. Trade: Carpenter. Name of mother: Mary. Names of younger brothers: James and Joses and Juda and Simon. Sisters: Names unknown, but living at same address. About the only thing it omits is the telephone number. Yes, somebody drew a diagram of Jesus' family tree, and then looked at the map, and went off in disgust. This text, you understand, is the comment of certain citizens of Nazareth, Palestine, about the preacher who filled their pulpit one Sabbath in the year A. D. 27. I have heard many comments on sermons after service, but never one like this. Usually if a man becomes famous, his home town is very proud of him, and gives him a royal welcome when he returns. But in this case the townsfolk of Jesus said in effect: "Nobody can be great who has ever lived next to us. Nobody can be famous whose family we know." They failed to see the reflection on themselves which these words implied.

Let us see where we are in the life of Jesus. The

fact is that our Lord has just completed a wonderful cycle of miracles, and Mark sketches these wondrous works in swift succession in order to reach a climax in the scene of the text. First, the Master stills the storm on the Sea of Galilee. Nature found her Master for the first time since God told the stars to shine, and the winds to blow, and the waters to surge. Here is One who can take the sea in His lap like a fretful child, and hush it to sleep. The second scene in Mark's drama is over in the country of the Gadarenes, where the Lord finds a candidate for the ministry in the cemetery, and transforms the Gadarene demoniac into a Gadarene evangelist who preached with such power that all men marvelled at him. Being invited out of their country by those city officials, who preferred swine to souls, the Master took ship and went to Capernaum. Hardly has His boat landed when the third scene is introduced by an official from the synagogue of the city, who flings himself passionately at Jesus' feet, and asks Him to hasten to his home to save his little dying girl twelve years of age. The good Physician starts on His way, and in the crowd is touched by the woman with the issue of blood, whom He also heals. Arrived at the house He puts the undertakers, and the paid mourners, and the relatives and friends out of the room, because they laughed at what He said and what He knew to be true. Out they went, and back came the spirit of the little girl. Now notice: Jesus has demonstrated His power in four different realms. He is supreme over ocean wave, and demon spirit, and wasted body, and pulseless heart. If this keeps on, He will ride on a

flood-tide of popularity into the hearts of the people. What will He do now? In the height of His glory He comes back to Nazareth once more. He had visited there before, and they had almost broken His heart; but believing as He does in the Gospel of the Second Chance, He goes home again. It was an easy day's journey from Capernaum on the lakeside to Nazareth among the hills, and the Master hopes that some tidings of His success have reached His fellow-townsmen by this time. So home the conquering Hero comes.

We have now reached the text. My text is really the matchless little cameo, this cartoon, if you will, the first six verses of the sixth chapter of Mark. I am so thankful for this human picture of Jesus, who is anxious, like every other man in the height of his power, to get back home. "It is all right to have them love me at Capernaum, but what do they say about me at Nazareth?" There is no word for home in the Hebrew language, because the sons of Palestine have always regarded themselves as pilgrim strangers in the earth, but their word for house means a refuge; Jesus was thus seeking a refuge back with His old friends and neighbours: for whether it be Nazareth or New York, there is no place like home.

When Dom Pedro II, Emperor of Brazil, died in Paris some years ago, he was laid to rest in the soil of his native land, which he had brought with him (when compelled to abdicate his throne) for that very purpose. He would sleep in South American soil even in France. When Mr. Lin-

coln received the news of his nomination by the Chicago Convention in 1860, he crushed the dispatch into his pocket, and amid the shouts of those around, quietly rose and said, "There is a little woman down at our house who would like to hear about this. I think I will go down and tell her." When Mr. Garfield took the oath of office as President of the United States before the assembled thousands, the first thing he did as President was to bend and kiss the aged mother who had followed him with her love and prayers from the canal-boat to the White House. Then, too, when the Roman General came home after winning his country's battles abroad, he was honoured by a triumphal arch 'neath which he marched in majesty, and was accompanied to his home by the anthems of an appreciative people. Everywhere the man who has heard the plaudits of the world finds sweetest of all the praises of home. How was it with Jesus? Legend would have made it the same with Him, but the honest Scripture narrative gives us instead of climax, anticlimax. The Hero of Capernaum and Gadara becomes the Outcast of Nazareth. They called Him the Carpenter and went on about their business; and He quietly went out of their city gate with a broken heart.

A Scotch preacher has dared to try to paint this picture. He portrays a simple house, with a group of men and women and children about the door. On the faces of two of the men is a laugh as one of them moves off to his work. A woman is picking up a pail of water, and another turning into the house. Both are indifferently taking up their tasks again after be-

ing interrupted by a Stranger. Only the children are wistfully watching the Man as He goes down the road. As for the Master, His garments are travel-stained, His feet bleeding from the long journey to reach His home, and His gait is marked by weariness. There is no anger in His eyes, but His head is bent upon His breast, His hands hang heavy at His side, and the evening mists are gathering before Him as He trudges on into the night.

This text of ours catches the Saviour before He leaves town. I propose to go through that Sabbath day with Him, and note the evolution of the unbelief of these Nazarenes. The trouble with the people was, they were near-sighted. They needed spectacles. They were suffering from moral astigmatism. Their lenses were in bad need of repair. Their horizon was too small. And we can discover, I think, three steps in their attitude, or three degrees in their near-sightedness. The first result of their near-sightedness was Admiration, the second was Indignation, and the third was Lost Salvation. Let us study these in detail.

I. The First Result of Their Near-sightedness Was Admiration.

Some one has compared the Christ of the Four Gospels to the several hours of the day. The Jesus of Matthew he compares to the morning sun in a cloudless sky; the Jesus of Luke to the rainbow set by the retiring sun along the track of the retreating storm. The Jesus of John is compared to the open heaven of a perfect day. But the Jesus of Mark reminds us of the afternoon tempest shouting through

the air and uprooting the great oak trees. This description is true of the scene before us, at least. The Man of Galilee comes into that quiet town of Nazareth, and really upsets things. He blows across the tranquil life of those villagers as a mighty wind which tears up everything that does not bend in accordance with its direction. The people begin to sit up and take notice when this unexpected Visitor begins to speak.

Let us picture to ourselves the scene if we can. Jesus probably entered the town quietly one day, and without furor or flurry awaited the coming of the Sabbath day, and then went to the synagogue for worship. The synagogue service of the time was not stereotyped but free, and hence the presiding officer would feel at liberty to ask Jesus to take part in the service at the proper time. When the opportunity was given, the Master began to speak. I can just fancy the look on the faces of the congregation as He proceeded in His address. "He spoke as one having authority and not as the scribes." You remember how Simias said to Socrates, "Cebes and I have been considering your argument, and we think it is barely sufficient;" and how Socrates replied, "I dare say you are right, my friend." But there is none of this apologetic concession about this Nazareth Preacher. He sweeps the decks before Him with His majestic pronouncements, and these people who had known Him for years and traded at His shop can only gasp in their wonderment and admiration. They were astonished both at His teaching and miracles, as all the world has since been.

Jesus of Nazareth has had many admirers. When Schrenk the theologian read the words "Blessed are the pure in heart," he exclaimed, "That language has been spoken only once." Jean Paul Richter said of Him, "He is the purest among the mighty, and the mightiest among the pure." Channing, that broad Unitarian whose spirit was so much broader than his creed, said, "His character is entirely removed from human comprehension." Sabatier, the French churchman, when weary of life, and not knowing where to turn, said he went to Jesus of Nazareth, because in Him alone he could find optimism without frivolity, and seriousness without despair. Even John Stuart Mill found in the life and sayings of Jesus a "stamp of originality which put the Prophet of Nazareth in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast," and he goes on to add that religion has not made a bad choice in pitching on this Man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity. Oh, yes, the world has laid garlands a-plenty at His feet. John Hay, nineteen centuries after His time, built our American diplomacy upon His teachings. Bernard Shaw, the iconoclast, asks the question, "Why not give Christianity a trial?" Dr. Gladden claims that the Carpenter was the inspiration of Dante the poet, Angelo the artist, Fichte the philosopher, Hugo the litterateur, Wagner the musician, and Ruskin the preacher. You remember that only twenty-nine of the first two thousand names suggested for our American Hall of Fame were accepted, but Jesus of Nazareth has had a practically unanimous vote of the world's appreciation.

Now I come to the point: Mere admiration is not enough in the case of Jesus Christ. Look, for example, at the attitude of Nicodemus. What an astounding conversation that is, on the housetop that night, between the doctor of theology and the Carpenter of Nazareth! Dr. Nicodemus comes with his admiring and appreciative verdict: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do the works thou doest except God be with him." Now, you would expect the flattered young Mechanic to reply, "Thank you so much, Doctor. I appreciate your tribute to my origin." Instead of that, what does Jesus say? "You, sir, must be born from above." What an amazing reply! And as far as we know, Nicodemus never came out into the open, but instead of salvation, contented himself with admiration. You see the same thing in the case of Peter on the Day of Pentecost. The people marvelled at the things they saw. But Peter does not allow their emotion to stop at the mile-post called wonder, but hammered home the truth until 3,000 souls had made their way through into the Grand Central Station of Peace with God through Jesus Christ. Why stop at a way-station when the express will carry you home? That was the trouble with near-sighted Nazareth, for she mistook the way-station for the terminal and got off in the wilderness, and never found her way home to God.

On the other hand, there are many who board the train at the way-station, who ultimately land at home. I remember the young Japanese about whom Dr. Woelfkin told us on one occasion. He said that this

young man came to him and told him that he wanted to be a Christian, but that he was not sure about the deity of Christ, and Dr. Woelfkin asked: "What do you believe about Jesus?" "Oh," said he, "I admire Him immensely. I regard Him as the most lovable character of whom I have ever read. I would like to model my life on His. But I am afraid I cannot be a Christian on that." Dr. Woelfkin replied: "Take Him on the faith that you have, and if you are willing to be led into higher heights and deeper depths He will reveal Himself more fully to you as the days go by." And Dr. Woelfkin said that the young Japanese came back to him some months later with a smile on his face, saying, "Now I know that He is the Son of God." What had happened? His admiration for Christ as a Man had grown into reverence for Christ as a God. Doubtless the young Japanese could have repeated sincerely the words of Richard Watson Gilder's imaginary heathen who was sojourning in Galilee in the year 32 A. D. :

"If Jesus Christ is a Man,
And only a Man, I say
That of all mankind I will cleave to Him,
And to Him will I cleave alway.

"If Jesus Christ is a God,
And the only God, I swear
I will follow Him through heaven and hell,
The earth, the sea and the air."

II. The Second Result of Their Near-sightedness Was Indignation.

Notice, if you will, the strange reactions of the human heart. The same congregation which at first

was delighted now seems disgusted. The wiseacres and officials said in substance this: "Why, this is perfectly ridiculous. What the young man says is wonderful enough; but the idea of Him teaching us! We who live out on Knob Hill have often brought Him our plows to mend, and here we sit listening to the instruction of a tradesman who has never seen a theological seminary, and has never been licensed to preach. The idea of a carpenter turned prophet, and of a mechanic become minister!" Now all this discussion was going on while Jesus proceeded with His sermon, and it was rather discourteous to the Speaker, to say the least.

I, for one, am much obliged to these critics. Without knowing it they have given us some interesting information. Here alone we are told that Jesus worked at the carpenter's trade. Elsewhere we learn that this was His father's occupation, but here alone that it was His too. It looks as though Joseph was dead at this time and Jesus had become the head of the house and the bread-winner.

One of the old church fathers seems to think it necessary to save Christ's dignity from the prose fact of handling the hammer and saw, and toiling at the carpenter's bench; and so he says that Jesus, by making plows and yokes, taught by these symbols the necessity of righteousness and action. But the prose fact remains. Let us not make poetry of it. Let us tell the upset world to-day that Jesus was a carpenter. Go tell it to the man on the East side, the man of the Labour Union, the Bolshevik. Tell him that Jesus was a Carpenter before He was a Re-

deemer, and this will bring back the Christ of the high altar and the stained window to where He belongs by the side of the labouring man.

Will you stop with me in front of this Carpenter's shop for a moment? Every educated Jewish boy was supposed to be taught a trade. The Rabbis said that he who taught not his boy some useful occupation was training him for idleness and thievery. The village carpenter in Christ's time was very much like the modern village blacksmith. Almost all the agricultural implements were made of wood, and consequently the village workshop would become the center of the town's life. Our Lord never forgot His training there, for all through His ministry there were reminiscences of these days cropping out. When He spoke of the splinter and the beam, and the green wood versus the dry, and the cubit added to the stature, He was running back in memory to the day of the commonplace toil.

Now, let us turn from the Carpenter to His critics. Ho for these people who explain a man by the city directory! Can Stratford-on-Avon explain Shakespeare? When you have threaded all its highways and byways, and surveyed its shops and studied its life, can you put them all together and make Hamlet? Can Eisleben explain Luther? When you have run through all the history of the place, and visited the Burgomeister, and met all the dignitaries of the time, do you get the materials of the Lutheran Reformation there? And similarly, can Corsica explain Napoleon? Does the little island, with all its wide expanse of ocean view, give you a prophecy of

the French Revolution? No, none of these do. And can Nazareth explain Jesus? Can you find anywhere in its lanes and fountains, its people or possessions, any explanation of this Carpenter? No, the city directory is not meant to furnish foundations for character. It simply tells you the place a genius hangs up his hat or takes off his shoes; but it does not explore the man's soul. If big cities made big men, we should all want to be born in New York or London. But as a matter of fact, there are many men born in New York who are never heard of in Hoboken; while another man can be born in Hodgenville, Kentucky, who will shake a great nation at a time of civil war; and another Man can be born in Bethlehem of Palestine and move the world.

“Common as the wayside grasses,
Ordinary as the soil,
By the score he daily passes,
Going to and from his toil,
Stranger he to wealth and fame—
He is only What's-His-Name.

“Cheerful 'neath the load he's bearing,
(For he always bears a load;),
Patiently forever faring
On his ordinary road;
All his days are much the same—
Uncomplaining What's-His-Name.

“Not for him is glittering glory,
Not for him the places high;
Week by week the same old story—
Try and fail and fail and try.
Life for him is dull and tame—
Poor old plodding What's-His-Name.

"Tho' to some one else the guerdon,
Tho' but few his worth may know;
On his shoulders rests the burden
Of our progress won so slow.
Red the road by which we came
With the blood of What's-His-Name."

Do you realize the greatness of the people next door to you? Most of us are far-sighted when it comes to this. Distance lends enchantment to the view. I wonder if that is not what the writer of Proverbs has in mind when he says, "Wisdom is before the eyes of him that hath understanding, but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth." Here is the Persian farmer, Ali Hafed, who sold his possessions and went far in search of precious gems, when, had he only known it, the great Golconda diamond mines lay hidden in his own front yard. William Winter has described for us the people who lived in Shakespeare's time, and passed him on the street without knowing whom he was:

"The folk who lived in Shakespeare's day,
And saw that gentle spirit pass
By London Bridge the frequent way,—
They little knew what man he was."

When the statue of a literary man was unveiled abroad some years ago, an American visitor said to the widow of the man his nation delighted to honour: "What an inexpressible privilege you had to know him so intimately, to listen to his table talk." "I suppose so," she replied, "but his table manners were not always nice." Genius could not be recognized

for forks and spoons and knives. "Far-away birds have fine feathers," indeed, as the old saw has it. Maeterlinck in the preface to his translation of Emerson said truly: "There remains only the life of to-day, and yet we cannot live without greatness." He goes on to point out that one secret of Emerson's greatness was his discovery of the sublimity of the commonplace daily toil of life. You have read how a strange workman one day took his place among the shipwrights in a yard in Amsterdam. He occupied himself with the rudest work at first, for it was evident to all that he was not a master workman. What was the astonishment of his fellow-workers to see persons of the highest rank come and pay their respects to him; for he was no less a person than Peter the Great, the founder of the Russian Empire. Here was a czar in the clothes of a shipwright, and yonder in Nazareth was a God in the guise of a carpenter; and if we look sharp we too may discover unexpected greatness next door to us, in the guise of some two-by-four commonplace soul.

"Joses the brother of Jesus was only a worker in wood,
And he never could see the glory that Jesus his
Brother could;

'Why stays He not in the workshop,' he often used
to complain,
'Sawing the Lebanon cedar, imparting to woods
their stain?'

"Thus ran the mind of Joses, apt with plummet
and rule,
And deeming whoever surpassed him either a
knave or a fool.

For he never walked with the prophets in God's
great garden of bliss,
And of all the mistakes of the ages the saddest
methinks was this,—
To have such a Brother as Jesus, to speak with
Him day by day,—
But never to catch the vision which glorified His
clay."

How did Jesus receive the glad hand of ice which Nazareth gave Him? Oh, He quietly remarked that a prophet has no honour in his own country, and then calmly went on His way. Now take Mohammed's list of the four great prophets: Abraham, Moses, Christ, and himself. You discover that Abraham had to leave Ur and go to Canaan; Moses had to leave Egypt and go to Midian; Christ had to leave Nazareth and go to Calvary; and Mohammed had to leave Mecca and go to Medina. A prophet's home-folks don't like him. Dante was expelled from Florence. Necker had to flee from the fickle people whom he had saved in the financial crisis of the French Revolution. Suvarof was scorned by his own king. And Wolsey was turned over in his gray hairs by the government to which he had given the best years of his life. Truly, the world rewards its prophets with a cross! A certain text-book on Physics in discussing the subject of thermometry mentions principally three: The Centigrade, the Fahrenheit, and the Reaumur. The author shows that by the very irony of history, in not a single case of the three has a nation officially adopted the thermometer invented by one of her own sons; and in a footnote he says: "Truly, a prophet is not without honour but in his

own country." We can understand this treatment of the prophet when we get a proper definition of him and his work. A prophet has been defined as a man who goes ahead alone and opens some new door in human history. Holding the door open with one hand, with the other he wields a sword until humanity has marched in procession through the door. Then when enough have gone in the prophet finds that his work is done, and he passes on to his reward. He indeed is a man who is "cannonaded this side of heaven and canonized on the other side," and whosoever does the work of a prophet shall likewise receive a prophet's reward: the cross here, and the crown yonder.

III. The Third Result of Nazareth's Near-sightedness Was Lost Salvation.

Doubt Street runs in two directions, and he who is a traveller in the street of Doubt may be headed toward the end which runs out into the Boulevard of Unbelief, or on the contrary he may be going toward the Highway of Faith. St. Thomas was a traveller for a while on this street, but he found the way getting darker and darker as he proceeded, and he suddenly turned him about while he still had daylight to see, and he made his way back to the broad acreage of Sunshine Land which we call Faith. Now these Nazarenes, on the other hand, when they once got started on the highway, held on their road until they landed in the Tunnel of Darkness which we call Unbelief. It makes all the difference which way you are headed on the Road of Doubt.

There is such a thing, be it known, as the art of doubting well. That is Plato's definition of philosophy, I believe, "the art of doubting well." The poet Browning in fancy builds two worlds side by side. One of them he calls Rephan, which he describes as a world free from the pull and strain of doubt, but as a consequence utterly stagnant; while on the other hand, the globe which he calls Earth is a place filled with misgivings and doubts but at the same time full of progress and hope. This is a true contrast, doubtless, for doubt is a sign of life if we will only take the poet's advice and cleave to its sunnier side. But the people of our story insisted on taking the shady side of the street, and in walking deeper and deeper into the gloom until they found themselves in the Night of Unbelief, too far removed from the Saviour's gracious healing power to be blessed and helped by Him.

Listen to the record: "He could there do no mighty work because of their unbelief." That is putting the matter very strongly, is it not? Is it possible that unbelief can tie the hands of Omnipotence? Yes, that is it. Here is the word of a modern psychologist: "Faith is the channel through which the power manifests, the power itself being God. Prayer is the atmosphere in which the power works, and suggestion is the method by which the soul is brought into relation with that power." So modern psychology confirms the ancient record: for if faith is the channel through which the divine power is manifested, then by the same token unbelief is the gate which closes the entrance to the channel, and even Omnipotence

cannot force its way through a wall erected by the human will without doing violence to that will. Hence it is that healing is impossible without faith. There is one view of the miracles of Christ which insists that their main object was to produce faith in Him and His mission. If that is so, then the place for the greatest exhibition of miracles would be the place where unbelief was the most dense; but the very opposite is the fact: where faith is already present, there the miracles appear; and where it is absent they fail to be manifest:—all of which shows that faith is a prerequisite rather than a consequence of help from God.

How is it with us to-day? Are we pilgrims of the twentieth century still marching along the highways of Doubt, as were the ancient Nazarenes? Mr. G. K. Chesterton, the eminent English essayist, puts it quaintly when he remarks that modesty has removed from the organ of ambition and settled upon the organ of conviction. He says it is quite proper that men should be somewhat uncertain about their own abilities, but it is too bad that they should be so uncertain about their convictions. He believes that we are on the road to producing a race of men so mentally modest that they will refuse to believe in the multiplication table. I will agree with Mr. Chesterton in so far as this: that those who are marching on the highway of Doubt toward the darkness are fitly described by him, but I insist that he is blind to the countless number of pilgrims who are going the other way, and who can sing with feeling the old familiar hymn:

“Here in the body pent,
Absent from Him I roam,
But nightly pitch my roving tent
A day's march nearer home.”

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: if we turn our backs on Jesus of Nazareth we will be the losers, and not He. Do you remember that last touch of the artist before this scene closes? Here it is: “And he went round about the villages teaching.” Jesus of Nazareth insists on being heard somewhere, and if the city of Nazareth will not receive Him, a village in the quiet country will take Him in. I like that thing Disraeli once said to a discouraged Jew: “Remember, you belong to a race that can do everything else but fail.” The Carpenter, Christ, is a Man who can do everything else but fail. He can be born in a manger, raised in an out-of-the-way village, apprenticed to a humble trade; He can be betrayed by his friends and condemned like a criminal and die like a convict; but the one thing He cannot do ultimately is to fail. He must rise again on the third day. Let New York and Los Angeles and all the big Nazareths of the twentieth century be well assured that if they ask Jesus out He will go, but their loss will be others' gain. He will not be stung into silence by their indifference, but will quietly go on His way to victory by way of the village places. To-day I can see in fancy the same Carpenter standing before your city gates and mine. The latch is on the inside. He will never force His way in. What shall we do with Him? Shall we fling open the gate and lead Him down Victory Way,

and give Him the keys of the city to keep for aye?
Or shall we just quietly go on with the Wall Streets
and the Broadways and the Fifth Avenues of life,
while He sadly turns away to where a warmer wel-
come waits? No, by the help of God it shall not be.
There is a Carpenter at the gate, and we will let
Him in.

“Behold Him now where He comes,
Not the Christ of our subtle creeds,
But the Light of our hearts and homes,
Of our hopes, our prayers, our needs;
The Brother of want and blame,
The Lover of women and men —
With a love that puts to shame
All passions of mortal ken.
Ah, No! Thou Light of the heart,
Never shalt Thou depart —
Not till the leaven of God
Shall lighten each human clod;
Not till the world shall climb
To Thy height serene, sublime,
Shall the Christ who enters our door
Pass to return no more.”

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